DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 399 026 PS 024 410

AUTHOR	Johnson, Lynn G.; And Others
TITLE	A Curriculum for All Young Children: The EC-SPEED Curriculum Guide.
INSTITUTION	Ohio State Dept. of Education, Columbus. Div. of Early Childhood Education.; Richland County Board of Education, Mansfield, Ohio.
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	122p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, 65 South Front Street, Columbus, OH 43266-0308.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Development; Curriculum Guides; Disabilities; *Early Childhood Education; Mainstreaming; *Preschool Curriculum; *Preschool Education; *Special Education; Young Children
IDENTIFIERS	Developmentally Appropriate Programs; Ohio

ABSTRACT

This Curriculum Guide provides practical curricular suggestions that correspond to the best practice indicators included in the Early Childhood Special Education Program Design and Evaluation Guide (EC-SPEED). Developed through funds provided by the Ohio Department of Education as one of several of EC-SPEED materials, it is based on the assumption that education for preschool children with disabilities should blend developmentally appropriate practice and exceptionality appropriate practice and celebrate human differences in inclusionary settings. The first four sections discuss the philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations upon which the early childhood special education program is designed. The fifth section outlines the general and specific implications for a curriculum serving all children. Specific curricular implications corresponds to nine program elements in the EC-SPEED, physical, cognitive, social, emotional, self-help, language, and aesthetic development; transition; and intradomain goals. Each item includes a goal statement, a best practice statement, four types of classroom implications from the goal and best practice statements, and best practice examples observed at exemplary early childhood centers during the Ohio Department of Education Preschool Service Delivery Project. The implications concern what effect the best practice statement will have on the learning environment, activities and materials used, adult behavior, and behavior of children in the program. (KDFB)

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A Curriculum for All Young Children:

The EC-SPEED Curriculum Guide

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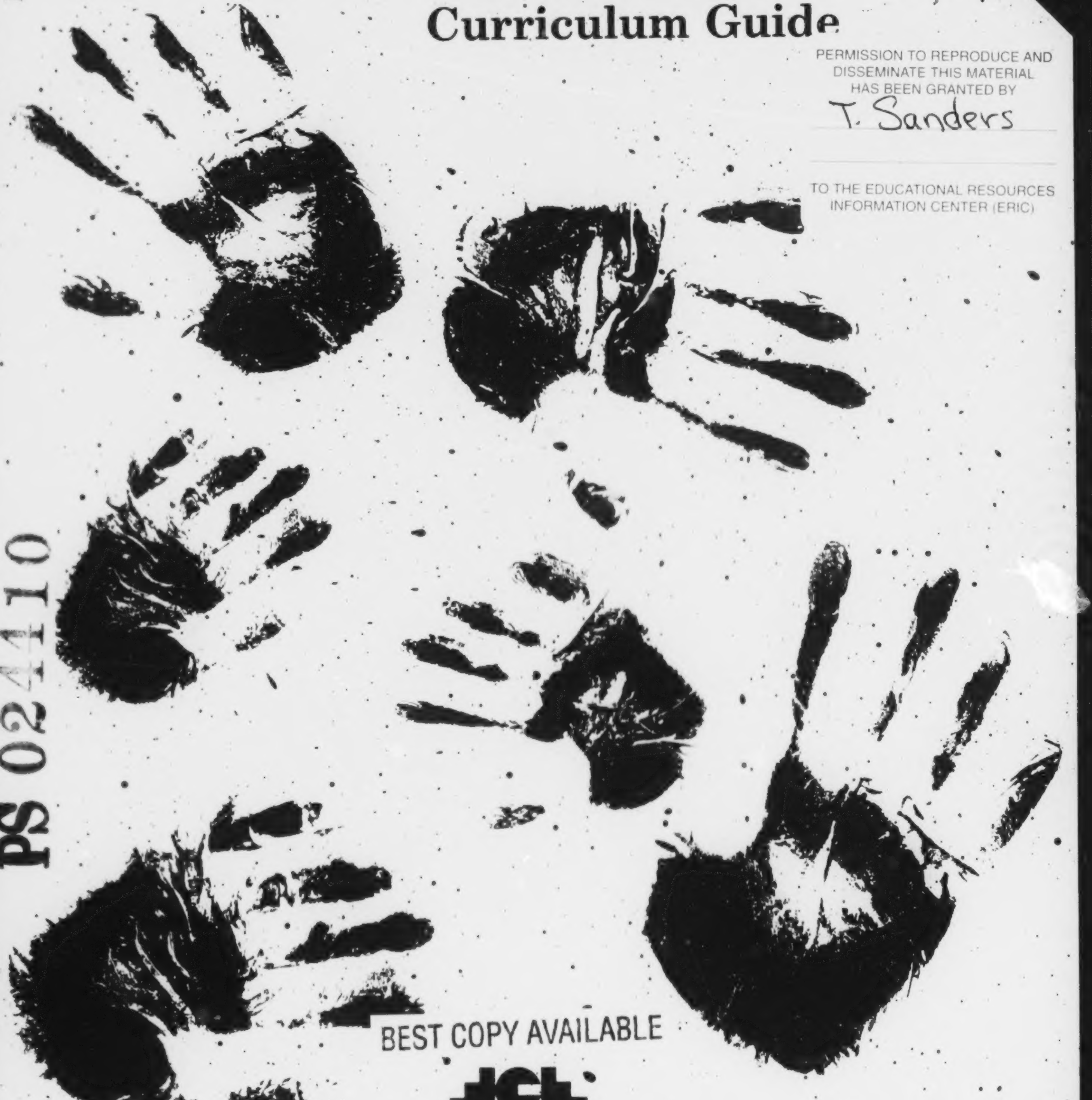

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A CURRICULUM FOR ALL YOUNG CHILDREN

The EC-SPEED Curriculum Guide

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The development of this Guide was funded by a Dropout Prevention Grant from the Ohio Department of Education to the Richland County Board of Education. A special thanks is extended to David C. Cardwell, Superintendent, and staff of the Richland County Collaborative Early Childhood Program for their involvement in and support for the development of this Curriculum Guide.

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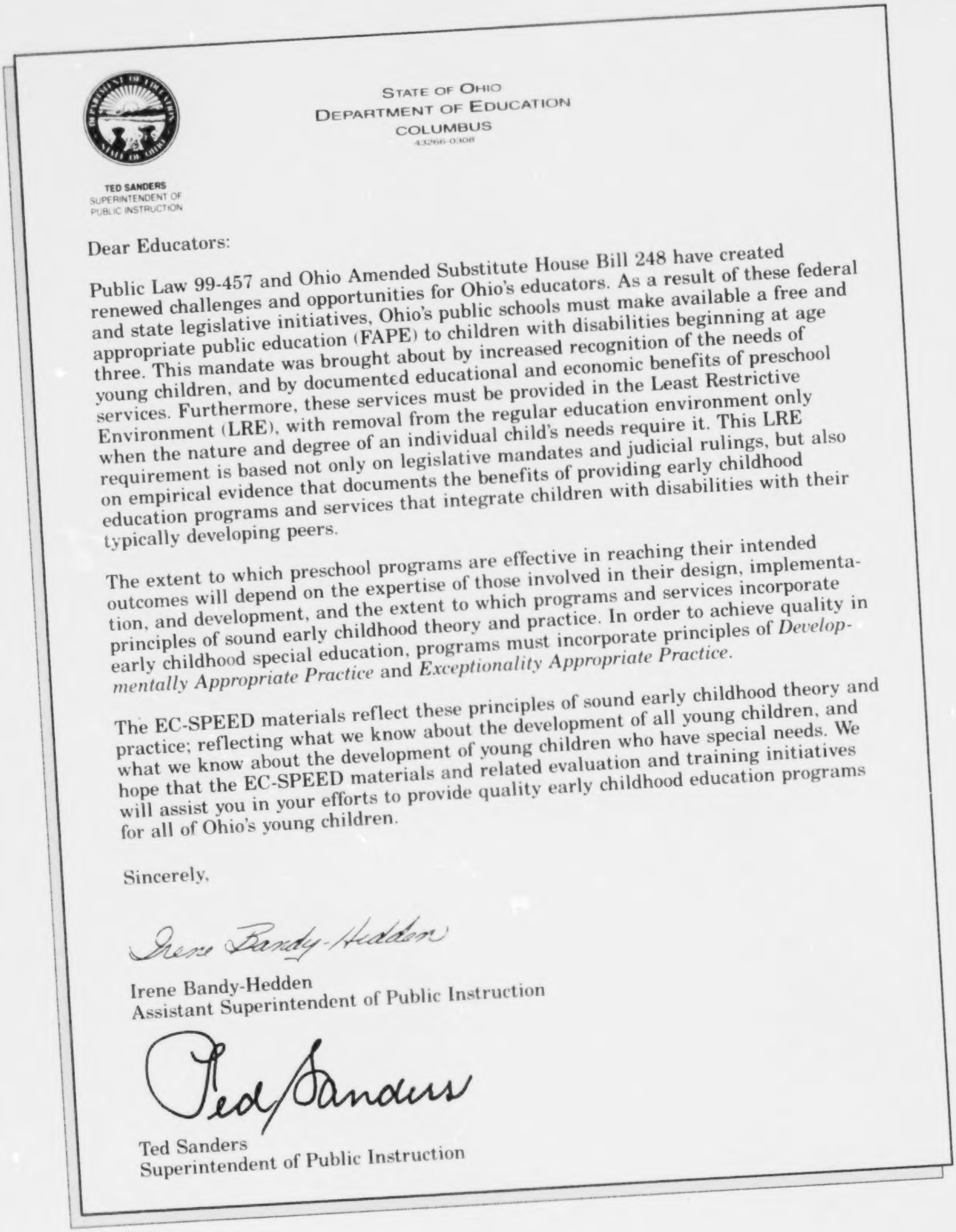

STATE OF OHIO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COLUMBUS
43266-0308

TED SANDERS
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Dear Educators:

Public Law 99-457 and Ohio Amended Substitute House Bill 248 have created renewed challenges and opportunities for Ohio's educators. As a result of these federal and state legislative initiatives, Ohio's public schools must make available a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities beginning at age three. This mandate was brought about by increased recognition of the needs of young children, and by documented educational and economic benefits of preschool services. Furthermore, these services must be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), with removal from the regular education environment only when the nature and degree of an individual child's needs require it. This LRE requirement is based not only on legislative mandates and judicial rulings, but also on empirical evidence that documents the benefits of providing early childhood education programs and services that integrate children with disabilities with their typically developing peers.

The extent to which preschool programs are effective in reaching their intended outcomes will depend on the expertise of those involved in their design, implementation, and development, and the extent to which programs and services incorporate principles of sound early childhood theory and practice. In order to achieve quality in early childhood special education, programs must incorporate principles of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* and *Exceptionality Appropriate Practice*.

The EC-SPEED materials reflect these principles of sound early childhood theory and practice; reflecting what we know about the development of all young children, and what we know about the development of young children who have special needs. We hope that the EC-SPEED materials and related evaluation and training initiatives will assist you in your efforts to provide quality early childhood education programs for all of Ohio's young children.

Sincerely,

Irene Bandy-Hedden

Irene Bandy-Hedden
Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction

Ted Sanders

Ted Sanders
Superintendent of Public Instruction

INTRODUCTION

Background

Following the passage of Public Law 99-457 in 1986, a variety of activities were initiated by the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, that were designed to promote a quality and comprehensive early childhood special education service delivery system in preparation for Ohio's 1991 mandate to serve preschool-age children with disabilities. One of these activities was the creation of the *Statewide Preschool Special Education Service Delivery Project*. The objectives for the *Project* were as follows:

- Develop an instrument to screen written program descriptions and evaluate programs on-site;
- Identify existing exemplary early childhood special education programs;
- Complete on-site evaluations of selected exemplary programs;
- Document/describe components of exemplary programs in writing, and with photos, slides, and videotape; and
- Develop training materials related to Project findings so that best practice components could be replicated in Ohio.

The EC-SPEED evaluation and training materials are the result of five years of research and product development by the *Statewide Preschool Special Education Service Delivery Project Team*.

Philosophy

Inherent within the EC-SPEED is a philosophy that quality early childhood programs result from the effective integration of children with disabilities with their typically developing peers. And that effective integration enhances the development of children with disabilities as well as the development of typically developing children. Effective integration results in programs where the principles of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* and *Exceptionality-Appropriate Practice* are integrated.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The actualization of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* rests upon the understanding that every child is unique with an individual pattern of growth and development. The program curriculum, materials, and adults are responsive to the individual abilities and interests of children. Differing levels of ability and development are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate learning activities.

Exceptionality-Appropriate Practice

Exceptionality-Appropriate Practice is accomplished when a developmental sequence is used with all children. Instruction should begin at the point of the child's level of proficiency, and proceed sequentially as motivated by the child's interests and strengths. The integration of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help, and aesthetic areas of development should be reflected in instructional activities.

EC-SPEED Materials and Resources

The scope of the EC-SPEED incorporates a variety of evaluation and training materials and resources. All are available through each of sixteen Early Childhood Services Coordinators that coordinate, on a regional basis, Ohio's Early Childhood Statewide Training and Technical Assistance System. Following is a summary description of those materials and resources:

EC-SPEED Early Childhood Special Education Program Design and Evaluation Guide. This Guide provides a framework for designing and evaluating exemplary early childhood special education programs. Components include legal, program, and service delivery options. The Guide may be used by program staff for program design, self-evaluation of existing programs, or for external program evaluation from trained EC-SPEED evaluators.

A Curriculum for all Young Children: The EC-SPEED Curriculum Guide. This Curriculum Guide provides practical curricular suggestions that correspond to the best practice indicators included in the EC-SPEED Early Childhood Special Education Program Design and Evaluation Guide. Included are summary descriptions of exemplary activities observed during on-site visitations of model programs.

EC-SPEED Model Program Conference: Summary of Conference Proceedings. In the spring of 1991, a working conference was held in Columbus, Ohio for representatives of the five Ohio and eight national model programs that were involved in development of the EC-SPEED. During this three-day conference, practical solutions were generated in response to barriers to best practice that had been experienced by participants in the course of the development of their model programs. This publication summarizes the highlights of the proceedings of this conference.

Early Childhood at its Best! This half-hour-long showcase videotape presentation is available to provide interested persons with a summary of EC-SPEED principles and findings. The videotape is available for loan, or may be purchased for a minimal charge consistent with the actual cost of reproduction. The presentation is also available in multi-projector slide/tape format, which may be accessed for large group presentations on a fee basis that includes technical personnel and travel costs.

EC-SPEED Trainers/Evaluators. A cadre of trainers/evaluators is available to provide technical assistance and training relative to the use of EC-SPEED materials, and to provide an external evaluation of early childhood programs using the EC-SPEED Early Childhood Special Education Program Design and Evaluation Guide.

Model Program Sites. Five Ohio early childhood special education programs have been identified as model program sites as part of the EC-SPEED development process. In addition, over time, additional programs may be added to this list following their participation in an external review by EC-SPEED evaluators.

EC-SPEED Annotated Bibliography. This publication provides more than 300 annotations of cites that formed the foundation for development of the EC-SPEED. The bibliography will benefit service providers by providing a literature summary of useful historical, legislative, theoretical, research, practical, and issues-related information for early childhood special education programming.

In addition, the ***Ohio Early Childhood Curriculum Guide,*** published by the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education in 1991, is available to provide guidance in the provision of developmentally appropriate programs. The focus of the Guide is on the construction of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children birth through age eight, and is accompanied by a training module implemented statewide through a "trainer of trainer" network.

Acknowledgements

Model Program Sites

The EC-SPEED materials were developed with the support and assistance of educators, parents, and children from eight national and five Ohio model programs that were identified for on-site visitation and evaluation. The photos, slides, and videotaped documentation of exemplary programs and practices were obtained on location from the program sites listed below. We extend our sincere appreciation for their hospitality and their enthusiasm for making early childhood education the best that it can be!

Akron Public Schools
Akron, OH

Arlitt Child Development Center
Cincinnati, OH

Bank Street Family Center
New York, NY

Clayton Municipal School Integrated Program
Clayton, NM

Early Childhood Programs at Vermont College of Norwich University
Montpelier, VT

Hopewell Special Education Regional Resource Center
Hillsboro, OH

Merricats Castle Preschool
New York, NY

Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.
Dayton, OH

Oregon System of Higher Education
The Teaching Research Child Development Center
Monmouth, OR

The Creative Preschool
Tallahassee, FL

The Northwest Child Development Center
Seattle, WA

The Westside Community Center Special Services
Omaha, NB

Toledo Public Schools
Toledo, OH

Advisory Committee

Appreciation is expressed for the contributions of persons who served on the *Statewide Preschool Special Education Service Delivery Project Advisory Committee* during the preliminary stages of the Project's activities.

Mel Coleman, Superintendent, Mansfield City Schools
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Content Review

Appreciation is extended to each of Ohio's sixteen Regional Early Childhood Services Coordinators who reviewed the EC-SPEED printed materials during their final stages of development for consistency with *Ohio Rules for the Education of Preschool Children with Disabilities* and *Ohio Preschool Rules.*

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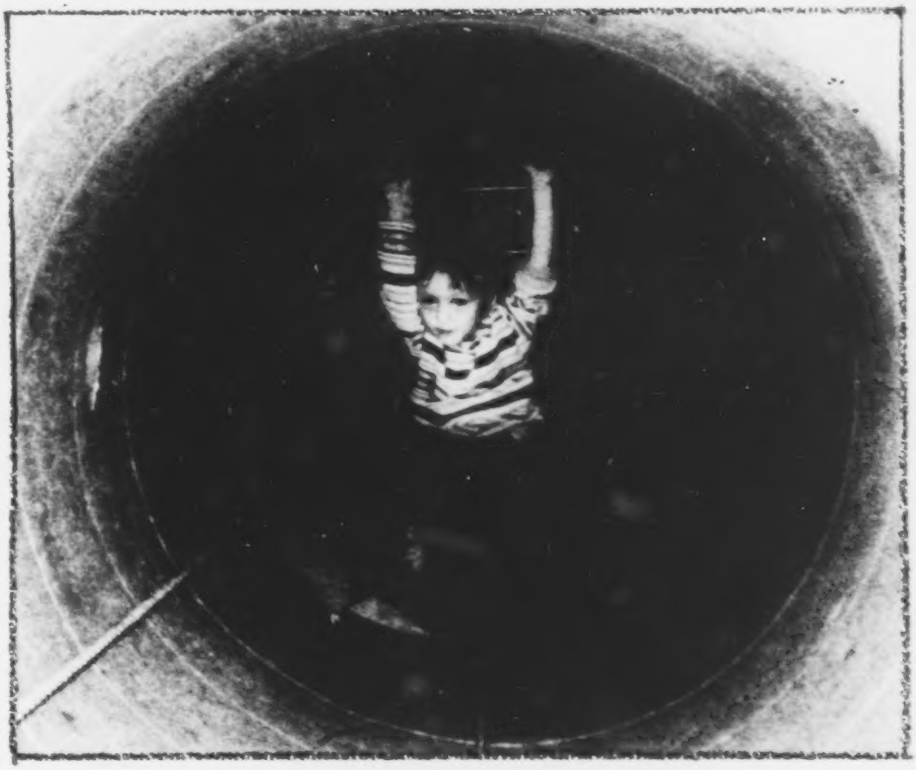
Willa Walker, Cuyahoga County Region
Linda Weber, North East Region
Diane Wells, Lincoln Way Region
Karen Wolf, East Shore Region

Administrative Support

Special thanks is extended for the support and assistance provided by Roger Bloomfield, Director of the Northcental Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center, and by all of the Center's staff members.

How to Use The EC-SPEED Curriculum Guide

A *Curriculum Guide for All Young Children* was written as a companion piece to the *Early Childhood Special Education Program Design and Evaluation Guide (EC-SPEED)*. Like the *EC-SPEED* *A Curriculum for All Young Children* exemplifies the beliefs that programming for young children should be "driven" by a celebratory attitude toward human differences that is manifested through inclusionary rather than segregatory educational settings for *all* young children, and the blending of best practices from early childhood education (developmentally approporiate practice) and special education (exceptionality appropriate practice). The first four sections of this guide discuss the philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations upon which the EC-SPEED and its companion pieces are built. The fifth section of the guide outlines the general and specific implications for a curriculum which serves *all* young children. Readers should note that the specific curricular implications correspond to curricular/program elements in the *EC-SPEED*. The numbers appearing before each goal relate to the numbers used to identify the corresponding item in the EC-SPEED. Each separate item includes a goal statement, a best practice statement, four types of classroom implications drawn from the goal and best practice statements, and best practice examples observed at exemplary early childhood centers during the course of the Ohio Department of Education Preschool Service Delivery Project. The implications concern what effect the best practice statement will have on the learning environment, the activities and materials used, program adult behavior, and the behavior of children in the program.



A CURRICULUM FOR ALL YOUNG CHILDREN:

THE EC-SPEED CURRICULUM GUIDE

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I.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of early childhood education is to enable young children to realize their unique potential across the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, self-help, language, and aesthetic developmental domains. In a more global sense, early childhood education provides a model for society of a truly integrated, inclusionary, pluralistic, community of active, life-long learners who celebrate human diversity.

II.

Philosophy Statement

Childhood should be celebrated by all and for all. Childhood is a necessary and important phase of life in its own right. Childhood sets the stage for whom a person can be. The essence of childhood is a gallery of firsts ... first experiences, first friendships, first challenges, first hopes, first dreams, first surprises, and first successes. All children have the right to a childhood filled with love, curiosity, exploration, wonder, play, discovery, excitement, fun, happiness, self-worth, nurturing, creativity, trust, ice cream, and make-believe. Children need time to be children. Therefore, the curriculum should provide a framework for adults to give children time to fully celebrate childhood.

III.

Key Curricular Principles

Every child is unique. Traditionally, in education, efforts to meet the unique needs of individual children have led to segregated educational programs for children with disabilities. Such segregation has resulted in an overall diminished sense of community. However, as Robert Ellsberg (1983, p. XXIX) states:

> "The basis for community is the recognition of a reality ... the fact that all, whether clever or dull, fit or infirm, beautiful or plain are members one of another."

A. Key Principle #1 —

Celebratory Attitude Toward Human Diversity

The curriculum should reflect a visionary attitude which celebrates the beauty of human diversity ... color, culture, religion, gender, age, and ability.

In order for this attitude to develop within an early childhood setting, two previously separate fields, early childhood education and special education, must become "members one of another." The EC-SPEED curriculum reflects the marriage of these two fields by merging best practices from early childhood education (developmentally appropriate practice) with best practices from special education (exceptionality appropriate practice). The remaining key curricular principles summarize this merger of developmentally appropriate practice with exceptionality appropriate practice.

B. Key Principle #2 —

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Every child is unique with an individual pattern of growth and development. The program curriculum, materials, and adults are responsive to the individual abilities and interests of children. Differing levels of ability and development are expected, appreciated, and used to design appropriate learning activities.

C. Key Principle #3 —

Exceptionality Appropriate Practice

A developmental sequence is used with all children that begins instruction at the point of the child's level of proficiency and proceeds sequentially, motivated by the child's interests and strengths. An effort is made to integrate the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help, and aesthetic areas of development through modifications in the educational setting, materials, activities, and teaching strategies which are all integrated into the child's natural learning environment.

IV.

Theoretical and Research Foundations

A. The "Whole Child" Concept

It is important to focus on the development of the "whole child" during early childhood education. Children are complex individuals composed of many characteristics and aspects; individuals that are constantly growing and changing in the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help, and aesthetic domains. These domains are not discrete but inextricably woven together, so that one domain can not change without affecting the others. When considering curriculum development, such a belief in "whole child" development causes us to be led by what we know about children, rather than what we know about content or subject areas. Once the educational needs related to the developmental domains are understood, curriculum can be generated in response to the natural development of children (Hendrick, 1988). Children pass through a variety of stages that are organized, predictable, and sequential, though not specifically age-related, as they develop in the different domains. This development occurs as a result of each child's unique genetic potential and the interaction of the child with his/her environment (Biber, 1984; Weber, 1984).

Before children can realize their potential in any or all of these domains, their basic needs must be met. Maslow (1954) suggests a hierarchy of needs beginning with the *physiological needs* of individuals. For children, examples of such needs are proper nutrition, clothing, and shelter, as well as a daily balance between activity and rest.

Maslow's next level of need is *safety and security;* safety and security that is both physical and psychological. Children need to feel safe, supported, relaxed, and happy in an early childhood setting. Beyond the educational environment, children need to feel continuity and connectedness between their family, culture, community, and the school so that the out-of-home environment can be perceived as safe (Bredekamp, 1989).

Once the physiological and safety needs of a child are met, *belongingness needs* become important. This need is best met through positive, mutually satisfying experiences with adults and peers.

This feeling of belongingness leads naturally to the next level of need, *self-esteem.* If adults and peers demonstrate they value a child, that child will usually develop a positive self-value or self-esteem.

Maslow's highest level of need is *self-actualization.* The equivalent of this need for children is personal autonomy, an ability to function autonomously within a group environment (Bredekamp, 1989).

Another important consideration for curriculum development is how children learn. Piaget (1952) states that children actively construct knowledge. They do this by interacting repeatedly with objects and people. Much of this interaction involves physical experience with objects. Children think about the consequences of their actions on these objects and continually revamp their ideas about the world around them.

Interaction can also be social in nature. Children learn much from adults and peers. Such interaction helps challenge the egocentrism of young children. Children also learn by modeling adults and peers, especially those who are perceived by the learners as nurturing, in a position of authority, and like themselves (Bandura, 1977).

Children learn best when intrinsically motivated. Teachers need to continually "identify content that intrigues children" and leads them to discover things for themselves (DeVries, 1987, p. 25). Curriculum based on children's interests tends to foster initiative, curiosity, attention, self-direction, and industry (Bredekamp, 1989).

The most effective means of learning for children is play. We believe the importance of this idea warrants a separate, more detailed section.

B. Play: The Principle Business of Childhood

Jerome Bruner (1975, p. 83) states that "play is ... the principle business of childhood." When asked to recall experiences from childhood, whether our own or the childhood of others, we tend to remember play experiences. Play is the activity of choice for children, and should be for adults who interact educationally with children on a regular basis. Much research documents that play is a significant factor in helping children become well-rounded adults (Frost & Sunderlin, 1985; Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1987). In fact, play facilitates development in each domain mentioned earlier. In the physical domain, play helps children develop healthy bodies and control both large and small muscles. Children run, jump, push, pull, pedal, and climb, as well as cut, draw, lace, button, and tie.

Play also serves an important role in cognitive development. Piaget (1962) maintains that play is one of the purest forms of symbolic thought for young children. Swedlow (1986) suggests that the basic concepts needed for later learning in reading, writing, and mathematics are learned by young children through play. Cognition is developed as children experience shapes, sizes, and colors, make decisions, solve problems, and act upon objects.

There is also a strong social aspect to certain kinds of play (Garvey, 1977). Smilansky (1968) has found that sociodramatic play helps children to perceive essential qualities of a social role and to generalize role concepts. Sociodramatic play helps children put themselves in another's place (Rubin & Howe, 1986) which fosters empathy and consideration. Such play also provides an abundance of opportunities for acquiring social skills such as: entrance techniques, negotiation, cooperation, and coping with others.

Emotional development is another domain that is positively related to play. Wolfgang (1977) sees play as a way to express, as well as release, feelings. It is also a way for a child to master his/her environment, whether realistically or imaginatively. Such mastery fosters the ego strength and self-esteem of young children (Hendrick, 1988). Play also offers the very necessary "relief from the pressure to behave in unchildlike ways" (Moffit & Omwake, no date) which may help balance the sometimes intolerable pressure to "grow up" placed on children by our society.

Play also promotes language development. Both Edmonds (1976) and Greenfield and Smith (1976) suggest that symbolic play is a necessary precursor of language development. Pelligrini (1986) found this to be especially true in the housekeeping area where children tend to use more descriptive and explicit language than observed in other early childhood learning areas.

So, it appears that play is a foundation for development across the domains mentioned earlier. Play needs to be upheld by early childhood education for its worthiness and in response to people who may attack or question its value. Such people may argue that program time might better be spent "working" or "really doing something." Children at play are really doing something; something that is vitally important for their future, as well as their present. As Joanne Hendrick (1988, p. 322) writes, play "is the lifeblood of children." Without play, there is no childhood.

C. Parent Involvement

The importance of the parent-professional partnership is supported by child development theory, research, literature, and in key federal legislation. Bloom (1964) and Hunt (1961) identified the early years of a child's life as the period of the greatest intellectual growth. Since parents are the first and primary teachers during this critical period (Goetz & Allen, 1983; Linder, 1983; Saracho & Spodek, 1983; Weiner & Koppleman, 1987) the importance of a strong parent-professional partnership is indicated.

The parent-professional relationship is further supported by the research of Bronfenbrenner (1975) who reviewed early intervention studies, finding that active family involvement was a key factor in program success and in lasting positive effects on cognitive gains after the programming ended. Bronfenbrenner concluded that the family is the most effective and economical system for facilitating the young child's development (Linder, 1983). Peterson (1987, p. 429-430) summarizes the major reasons for parent involvement as follows:

- Parents or their substitutes are the key teachers, socializing agents, and caregivers for children during the early years
- Parents can be effective intervention agents and teachers of their own children
- Parents are in a particularly strategic position to enhance or negate the potential benefits of an early intervention program
- Parents of young children with disabilities or at-risk conditions typically face additional demands and stresses that can test their coping abilities and parenting skills
- Involvement offers a mechanism for helping parents build a positive perspective about their child and their position as parents
- The greatest and most lasting benefits of parent involvement occur in programs in which parents are part of the intervention process
- Intervention works best when parents and professionals are working toward common goals for a child and when all are applying strategies that are compatible
- Involving parents, and helping them be effective teachers/interventionists in their own children's lives, has obvious economies
- Involvement of parents in planning and implementing special services for a young child is a parental right
- Parent involvement is advantageous simply because a great many parents are interested in their child's care and educational activities
- Involvement brings parents into contact with a great variety of resources that can help them in their parenting roles
- Parent involvement helps build parent and community support for early intervention programs

Weatherford (1986, p. 5), summarizes conclusions of parent involvement research by stating, "there have been few strong and widely supported conclusions drawn from evaluation research of early intervention programs for at-risk and handicapped children. However, one finding seems to be well documented across a wide variety of empirical investigations: Parent involvement in the programs is generally a very important variable in helping produce positive program outcomes."

The federal government has supported the importance of the home-school relationship by requiring that programs receiving federal dollars include parents as partners in the design of their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Additionally, government funding of parent information and training centers implies federal support for a parent role which goes beyond that of recipients of services to that of decision-makers (Weiner & Koppleman, 1987).

Most models for implementing parent involvement have been described in the professional literature regarding the varying levels of parent participation in early childhood programming (Escobedo, 1983). Scriven (1976, pp. 53-56), outlines three levels of parent involvement:

- Enhancement of communication through parent conferences and parent meetings
- Involvement of parents in the instructional program as resources and volunteers
- Involvement of parents in policy and curriculum decisions

Gordon (1970) and Gordon and Brievogel (1976), suggest five levels of parent involvement:

- Audience or bystander-observer
- Teacher of the child
- Volunteer
- Trainer/Worker
- Participant in decision-making

We believe that parents are the first and primary teachers of their children. The importance of parent involvement is also supported by theorists, research, and the federal government. It seems appropriate then, that early childhood programs should provide opportunities for all levels of parent participation in order to ensure that parents have individualized options for their involvement and that they are viewed as equal partners in the education of their young children.

D. The "Beauty Within Diversity" Concept

A segregatory attitude toward human differences has seemed to pervade the traditional American school system throughout history (Johnson, Johnson, McMillan, & Rogers, 1989). Even today, traditional, academically-oriented school curricula foster competition (Orlick, 1978), value individual achievement, and encourage conformity, thus discouraging human diversity (Johnson, Johnson, McMillan, & Rogers, 1989). Children who can neither perform nor conform are segregated into "special" classes in order to be "fixed" to look, behave, and score just like the standard American student. Rather than helping children discover that difference is delightful, segregatory practices teach children that difference is dangerous.

The reality is that humans *are* different from each other. Even though our basic needs are the same (Maslow, 1954), the effects of culture, social class, gender, age, and ability influence how we meet these needs (Saracho & Spodek, 1983). For example, all humans need shelter (Maslow, 1954), but the ways in which housing needs are met varies from culture to culture (Saracho & Spodek, 1983). Similarly, a child with disabilities and a typically developing child both have physical development needs but the early childhood educator will need to meet the two children's developmental needs in very different ways. It is important to develop celebratory attitudes toward human differences and learn to appreciate how these differences enrich our classroom communities. Rather than our traditional approach toward human diversity in the classroom in which children were modified to fit the curriculum, the beauty within diversity approach suggests that it is more appropriate to modify the curriculum to fit each child.

Cognitive developmental theory (Piaget, 1963) suggests that children construct their own knowledge from their experiences and interactions with objects and people in their world. Social learning theories suggest that children's attitude formation is greatly influenced by the social attitudes and behaviors modeled by others (Hendrick, 1990). Taken together, these theories indicate that children construct their attitudes from their interactions with others who model prevailing social norms and biases (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Many times, because of the prevailing norms and biases of our society, children's early conceptualizations lead to (Johnson, & Rogers, 1989):

- Preprejudice against differences
- Misconceptions about differences
- Discomfort with differences
- Fear of differences

Research demonstrates that, although young children don't understand the complex concepts of cultural differences (Ramsey, 1982), they are aware of, and develop biased attitudes toward, human differences related to culture, social class, gender, age, and ability (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Derman-Sparks (1989) summarizes some of the diversity-specific research, concluding that:

- Toddler-aged children notice race and gender differences and can appropriately apply gender labels and skin colors
- Young preschoolers can show preprejudiced behavior toward people with gender, race, and ability differences
- Older preschoolers demonstrate behaviors reflective of biased social norms

Cognitive developmental theory, social learning theory, and child development research indicate that in order for children's attitude formation to be positively influenced, the process must begin in early childhood (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Ramsey, 1982).

Our classroom communities are rainbows of diversity. If difference is delightful, then our classrooms must celebrate the uniqueness each of us brings to the learning community as a result of our differences.

Young children who live with this belief will more easily generalize this concept to the larger world as they develop.

Johnson and Rogers (1989) have proposed a proactive, preventative early childhood model for helping children discover the beauty inherent within human diversity. The beauty within diversity model can be incorporated in existing classroom activities across the curriculum. Children are introduced to the concept first using the object world such as teddy bears, balls, boxes, breads, bridges, etc. Plants and animals also offer many examples of the beauty inherent in the diversity of our natural world. Children discover that everything is beautiful in its own way. As children become more cognitively sophisticated, they begin to generalize this concept to human differences, therefore enabling their attitudes toward human diversity to be celebratory rather than accepting, tolerant, or biased.

It is important for children to discover the inherent beauty within human diversity. In order to do so, we need to move away from the traditional, academically-oriented educational curriculum toward a more developmentally appropriate curriculum which supports, nurtures, and celebrates the richness of human diversity. The concept of beauty within diversity is a proactive, preventative model (Johnson, & Rogers, 1989) which should be incorporated across the curriculum beginning in early childhood. While most argue that the schools are a microcosm of society, the opposite often seems to be true. A truly integrated, inclusionary, pluralistic early childhood program provides a model for society of a mutually enabling community that celebrates human diversity.

E. Integration

Given the segregated nature of special education over the past century, people have often wanted "proof" that integrating young children with disabilities with their typically developing peers "works." In fact, research does support integration. Over the past ten years, the evidence regarding integrated service for young children with disabilities has accumulated rapidly and according to Strain (1988, p. 1) "the importance of integrated services for young children with handicaps is not in doubt." However, the importance of integrating children with disabilities with their typically developing peers is not just an educational issue but a social one. Vincent, Brown, and Getz-Sheftel (1981, p. 73) state that "the least restrictive mandate of P.L. 94-142 can only be interpreted as being fulfilled if programming is conducted in an integrated setting: the degree and type of integration needs to be individually determined for each young handicapped child." But whether integration is provided or not is best summarized in a publication of the U.S. Office of Education titled *Purposeful Integration ... Inherently Equal* (1987, p. 15). "After all isn't this the purpose of education to prepare students to live in society? ... segregated settings prepare students to function in segregated settings." This means that the integration of children with disabilities with typically developing children does not have to be defended on the basis of research evidence any more than integration on the basis of race needs such a justification. In this context, integration is the moral right of children with disabilities.

Doug Bilken (1985, p. 5), states that "we believe that children who have disabilities have a right to grow up in a typical setting with typical peers. We believe that most decisions involving children who have disabilities are not scientific questions for professionals to answer. Rather, they are political and moral decisions that the entire community should make." Again, citing Bilken (1985, p. 3) "integration is a moral question. It is a goal, indeed a value, we decide to pursue or reject on the basis of what we want our society to look like."

Aside from being the morally and ethically correct thing to do, there is a considerable amount of research to support the practice of integrating children with disabilities with typically developing peers. Vincent, Brown, and Getz-Sheftel (1981, p. 23) summarize the issues relating to research and practice with respect to integration as follows:

> The correct definition of best educational practice must be that integrated programming is always the first choice. Such programs have been shown to result in equal if not greater skill gain for the students with disabilities involved than segregated programs. Even severely handicapped children have been shown to benefit from integrated experiences, although they need only to be shown to be as beneficial in order to validate such programming.

According to Safford (1989) research has established that young children with disabilities progress cognitively and socially at least as well in integrated settings as in settings that are segregated. Safford (1989, p.5) also states "many studies demonstrate that cognitive and social gains for the child with a disability are significantly greater than in settings where there is no opportunity for peer modeling of more competent behavior to occur."

Integrated settings enable children with disabilities to experience benefits that are simply not available in separate programs. Bricker & Bricker (1971, p.8) explain the importance of an integrated setting when they state:

> The ways in which a non-delayed child plays with toys and other objects in the classroom and playground provide greater variation in the types of activity available than that provided by the more limited repertoires of the delayed youngsters. This modeling of object-relevant play may provide a better instructional medium than a teacher demonstrating the same activity directly, since both approximations to relevant use and greater variations in the use of objects are evident in the play behavior of the non-delayed child.

Philip Strain (1988) summarizes research which finds that:

- No study that has assessed social outcomes for children in integrated versus segregated settings has found segregated settings to be superior
- Normally developing children have shown only positive developmental attitudes outcomes from integrated experiences

- On measures of how well children maintain skills after some initial teaching, developmentally segregated settings have been shown to have a toxic effect, i.e., children no longer use their newly taught skills
- There is no evidence that children with certain handicapping conditions or levels of impairment are poor candidates for integrated programs

While there is ample research that demonstrates that children learn through observation, practice, and modeling the behavior of their peers, one also needs to ask how typical children benefit from integrated settings. Safford (1989, p. 18) makes the point that "people seem to expect generalized limitation in children with disabilities but most handicapped children are not delayed in all developmental areas. In fact, many children with handicapping conditions demonstrate superior performance in some or even all other areas." All children have a contribution to make that can benefit their peers. In a sense they are building a mutually enabling community that includes all for the benefit of all; an integrated model for society that celebrates diversity.

The concept of integration includes:

- Integration of children with disabilities and typically developing children
- Integration of agencies serving preschool age children
- Integration of parents and families into the child's educational program
- Integration of special education teachers with early childhood teachers into the same learning environment, including the integrated of related services into the classroom
- Integration of developmentally appropriate practices with exceptionality appropriate practices

Thus the concept of integration goes beyond simply integrating children with disabilities and typically developing peers, but is a concept that pervades the philosophy of the entire program.

F. Classroom Management/Discipline

The two basic goals of early childhood classroom management/discipline techniques are helping children develop self-control and finding solutions to current classroom conflicts/crises. Adults working with young children must realize that the development of self-control is a long process that relates to the gradual building of ego strength and moral judgement. Building ego strength can be done by increasing children's feelings of competence. We can help children feel competent by giving them many decision-making opportunities, honoring their decisions, and allowing them to experience the consequences of their decisions. The development of moral judgement is promoted best when children are surrounded by affectionate, nurturing adults and when children are given reasons for why they should or should not behave in certain ways (Hendrick, 1984).

Classroom management methods should be non-threatening, not humiliating, and always respect the dignity of the child. We should set clear, consistent, and fair limits, and as children get older, help them set their own limits. If conflicts do arise, we should help children resolve their own conflicts and redirect them to more acceptable behaviors/activities. Children must be frequently, but patiently, reminded of class rules and the rationale for those rules. As all people do, children will make mistakes. Adults need to value these mistakes as learning opportunities, not failures. Listening intently to children is another way to respect their dignity, since they need to talk about their feelings and frustrations (Hendrick, 1984).

It is also important for adults to prevent, recognize, and relieve stress or anxiety in children before it leads to classroom disruptions. One of the best ways to prevent stress in young children is to have appropriate expectations regarding their physical, cognitive, social and emotional behavior. Excessive demands in any of these domains could cause stress. If signs of stress do occur, adults can offer stress-releasing activities such as water play, music, movement, children's literature, and quiet times. Physical comforting and active listening also help reduce stress (Bredekamp, 1987).

Adults can also prevent many classroom behavior problems by remembering the following ways to reach the goals of good discipline (Hendrick, 1984):

- reward behavior you want to see continued
- be persistent in the use of reasonable strategies
- position yourself to observe large areas of the learning environment you are in
- emphasize positive behavior, reminding children of correct behavior
- warn children before transitions are to occur
- arrange the learning environment for positive interactions
- have only a few basic rules
- keep the children's day interesting

If you consistently demonstrate the characteristics and strategies mentioned in this section, but still must deal with frequent disruptions or an occasional severe behavior crisis, the following five step method may be necessary if all else fails:

- warn the child
- remove the child from the current activity, but keep the child in an adult's presence
- acknowledge the child's feelings and restate the rules involved, with their rationales
- wait for the child to decide when to rejoin the group
- help the child to return and be more successful

However, it is important to repeat that the highest priority of our classroom management should be the development of self-control/responsibility by the child. Continual "disciplining" or direction by adults causes children to rely on others to control them rather than controlling themselves. Such a situation puts an undue burden on adults and thwarts children from realizing their potentials.

G. Individualization

Individualization for young children with disabilities means providing a developmentally appropriate program that is made accessible through accommodating teaching strategies and modifications to the environment. This means integrating the best of early childhood education strategies (developmentally appropriate practice) with the best of special education strategies (exceptionality appropriate practice).

Individualization for young children with disabilities does not mean teacher-directed, diagnostic/prescriptive practices that are typically associated with programs for older students with disabilities. Nor does it mean providing a preschool program characterized by direct instruction in formal academics that some early childhood programs advocate.

What it means first and foremost is providing a developmentally appropriate program. According to Phillip Safford (1989, p. 202) "young children demonstrating delayed development can thrive in early childhood settings characterized by developmentally appropriate practices." The first step in providing young children with disabilities an appropriate individualized program is to provide them with an integrated classroom that engages in developmentally appropriate practices and that is characterized by a developmentally appropriate curriculum. According to The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1987, p. 3) a developmentally appropriate curriculum:

- Provides for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach. Any activity that stimulates one dimension of development affects other dimensions as well
- Is based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress
- Emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials
- Provides learning activities and materials that are concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children
- Provides for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside the normal developmental range
- Provides a variety of activities and materials; teachers increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills

Individualization for young children with disabilities begins with the provision of a developmentally appropriate program. In fact, one dimension of developmental appropriateness is the concept of individual appropriateness. Individual appropriateness as defined by the NAEYC (1987, p. 2) means that:

> Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interaction with children should be responsive to individual differences. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. These experiences should match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's developing interests and understandings. Child's play is a primary vehicle and indication of their mental growth. Play also serves important

> functions in children's physical, emotional, and social development. Therefore, child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate practice.

It is this notion of individual appropriateness within the context of a developmentally appropriate, child-directed, teacher-supported play-based program that forms the basis for individualized programs for young children with disabilities. In fact, Widerstrom (1986, p. 78-83) supports just such a position when she argues for recognition of the fact that young children, disabled and typically developing, have more in common than do young and older children with disabilities. She also argues that good developmentally appropriate programs for young children are frequently more appropriate for young children with disabilities than the diagnostic/prescriptive practices typically applied with older students with disabilities.

By contrast, diagnostic/prescriptive special education tends to be characterized by teacher-directed instruction where the teacher is in control of prescribed learning. The teacher directs the child in activities that are intended to improve deficit skills. In contrast to a developmentally appropriate approach, children do not initiate their own activities and play is not typically viewed as a primary vehicle for child development across the domains.

According to Wiekert (1988, p. 49), "experience has shown that encouraging handicapped children to initiate their own activities enables them to develop their strengths as well as strengthen their weaknesses. As children develop their strengths, they learn they can do things they want to do so they develop feelings of competence and self-confidence." It is this notion of developing their strengths and feelings of competence and self-confidence, as opposed to practicing deficit skills, that is advocated for young children with disabilities.

This orientation of beginning with the child's strengths, encouraging children to learn through active self-directed exploration of a teacher-planned environment, is applicable even to children with severe and profound disabling conditions. Referring to severely and profoundly disabled children, McCormick and Noonan (1984, p. 82) report that "data suggest that early intervention should be based on a careful description of the child's existing competencies particularly those behaviors indicating that the child desires to engage and control the environment."

Such data suggest that even for children with severe and profound disabilities, an environment that begins instruction at the point of the child's proficiencies and encourages the child to engage and control the environment is appropriate. In fact, McCormick and Noonan (1984, p. 83) also maintain that "overly structured and controlled interactions and environments have the effect of fostering helplessness and dependency." However many classrooms for children with severe and profound disabilities are still characterized by teacher-directed and teacher-controlled instruction, i.e. the emphasis is on teaching specific teacher-selected responses to defined teacher stimuli. While some view teacher-directed and teacher-controlled instruction as the method of choice for children with severe and profound disabilities, it may not in fact be in their best interest. As McCormick and Noonan (1984, p. 82) implore, "handicapped children cannot be expected to achieve their full potential in a subjugating environment (any more than non-handicapped children can). Only an environment which is arranged to elicit and reward initiations can teach purposeful and independent behavior. An environment which does not attend to these behaviors will foster passivity and dependency."

By their very nature, programs that are developmentally appropriate are capable of accommodating the individual needs of most young children with disabilities. Still, to create an environment that is likely to allow children with disabilities to reach their fullest potential, it is often necessary to make all the facets of the program accessible through accommodating teaching strategies and environmental modifications. In recent years the focus of special education has been on how to make regular classrooms more accessible to children with disabilities. It is from these efforts that early childhood educators and special educators can work together to create the best of all possible educational environments for young children with disabling conditions. By beginning with a developmentally appropriate foundation and adding to that the knowledge of how to make such programs accessible to children with disabilities we can create an optimal learning environment for young children with disabilities and in fact for *all* young children.

The following sections suggest methods, strategies, and modifications to accommodate children with deficits in levels of developmental abilities in integrated developmentally appropriate programs. Efforts to combine developmentally appropriate practices with the techniques and strategies designed to make learning environments accessible to children with disabilities will result in programs that benefit all children.

1. Communication Abilities

Adults use a variety of techniques to stimulate language:

- Self Talk — adults talk about what they are doing as they interact and play with children
- Parallel Talk — teachers talk about what the child is doing, seeing, hearing, and feeling
- Expansion — adults expand utterances and provide relevant additional information transforming it into a grammatically complete, well-formed utterance
- Recasting — adults reformulate the child's utterance using a different syntactic structure
- Expatiation — adults add relevant information to the child's utterance
- Adults also —
  - ask open-ended questions that can be answered in different ways
  - encourage children to talk
  - listen
  - encourage much child-to-child and adult-to-child communication
  - demonstrate the relationship between the written and spoken word (take dictation, label natural objects, help children write words, etc.)

2. Cognitive Abilities

- Recognize the importance of play as the primary vehicle for cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development. Prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.
- Provide learning activities and materials that are concrete, real, and relevant to children's lives.

- Match the activities and materials to the child's developmental level and be prepared to increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of activities as children are involved with them and as children develop understanding and skills.
- Expect and appreciate differences in how long individual children will need to, and want to, engage in particular activities.
- Recognize that the child's need for repetitive practice and active rehearsal should occur through play and not through rote drill and practice directed by an adult.
- Provide and plan for daily opportunities for modeling and imitation of more competent peers. Encourage positive interactions of children with varying levels of skills and abilities.

- Face the child when speaking/develop good eye contact
- Touch or visually signal child before speaking
- Before speaking have other children use a cue to identify self (raise hand, stand, or teacher points to child who is speaking)
- Have pictures on cards of things the child wants to say or do; put on a "D" ring
- Always verbalize what the child communicates to you, "You would like a drink?"
- After the child has completed a task, briefly talk about what he or she just did
- Verbalize the sequence of events as they occur: "We're finished eating; now we'll clean-up"
- Experience is the basis of language development; encourage exploration, manipulation, and investigation
- Multi-sensory activities are excellent for language development; use fruits and vegetables to talk about smell, shape, taste, sound, and texture
- Teach functional language in natural settings. Teach child to label objects as they are used and to ask for things to get needs met; "I want milk" during snack time
- Teach other children to touch children with deficits in hearing abilities to get their attention
- Visually demonstrate and gesture as you speak
- "Ham-it-up", use facial expressions to encourage the child to focus on your face
- Talk at a normal rate and volume
- Use concrete objects to teach concepts like "round" and then orally repeat the word in sentences
- Transitions - Use a picture poster and point to what will happen next - Use visual signals for signaling transitions; demonstrate what is going to happen next
- Use preferential seating
- Encourage other children to use signs especially for functional words like drink, bathroom, eat, etc.
- Label everything in the classroom; pictographs on one side; words on the other
- When writing experience stories, draw or paste in pictures illustrating significant words or events
- Place picture books with clear sequential storylines in book corner
- Use flannel board stories with simple graphic plots; finger plays are excellent for language development
- Allow the hearing impaired child to preview stories that are read aloud

- Act out simple stories with plenty of visual props
- Remember that concentrated learning and listening are tiring and that some types of noise will interfere with listening and understanding
- Provide amplification system for classroom or for the teacher and hearing impaired child
- Provide picture sequences of daily directions, e.g., picture symbolizing "five more minutes to clean up"

4. Vision Abilities

- Use an ongoing verbal monologue to describe what is happening in a center or group activity "Susie has finished sifting the flour and now she is going to beat the batter"
- When reading a story aloud pass around small replicas of major characters; dogs, cats, cars, trucks, etc.
- Use cassette tape books at listening center
- Provide well defined boundaries; use tactile cues if possible
- Make materials accessible by reach and touch on child's level
- Use materials that are stimulating to touch, smell, hear, and taste in centers
- Orient child physically and orally, to classroom, keep it consistent or give quick verbal orientations daily
- Materials should have high contrast to background; use bright felt markers to outline boundaries of papers used for drawing, writing, and painting
- Provide verbal orientations whenever the child appears confused; encourage peers to do the same
- When possible, paint the rims and edges of bookcases, tables and door frames with a lighter or darker color
- Use books with clear simple pictures and large print
- Use materials with distinctive shapes, textures and bright contrasting colors
- Use talk and touch to reinforce; remember smiles, gestures, body cues, and eye contact are visual reinforcers
- Make use of tactile labels; raised "3" on Three Little Pigs book
- Use the names of children as you speak to them
- Use auditory cues for transitions
- Use transitions to teach spatial awareness concepts such as over, under, and around
- Use non-verbal cues for dismissal from group; everybody with a shirt that buttons can get their coats
- Use texture matching games
- Pegboards offer opportunities for both fine motor and prereading/prebraille activities
- Make use of amplified toys/radios/and classroom equipment
- Use physically guided and verbal prompts to "walk" the child through activities
- Encourage visually impaired youngsters to recognize people by their voice
- Demonstrate for other children how to introduce the child with a deficit in vision abilities to play objects and how to verbalize play
- Color contrast is important; put dark objects against light objects and vice-versa
- Place objects at child's level and guide child to examine using tactile senses
- Provide additional tactile, auditory and olfactory cues to materials
- Define work space, classroom areas and personal space

- During gross motor activity support child at the waist or from the back as they move through activities
- Tell the child what is available in a center and ask what they would like to be or do
- Seat a sighted child nearby who can describe activities
- Teach the visually impaired child to verbally cue others; "I'm going to throw the ball"
- Verbally label all sounds - swings, doors, big wheel, etc.
- Lay out table activities in a set pattern; verbally orient child to materials available and their position
- During snack time verbally orient child to where utensils and food are located
- To facilitate orientation, have child wear a bracelet on one arm so you can say, "move the arm with the bracelet up"
- Place coats, bags, toothbrushes, etc. in consistent accessible locations
- Do not let other children do self-help tasks for the child with a deficit in vision abilities
- Efforts are made to bring the environment to the child and still provide choice

5. Motor Abilities

- Modifications range from taping papers to desk, to using a head stick or pressure switch to operate communication devices or wheelchairs
- Make materials accessible at the child's level; raise tables, lower sand and water table, place materials on lower shelves
- Modify fine motor materials with elongated, enlarged, modified grips, knobs and handles; bristle blocks, modified scissors, switch activated toys, easy snap toys; use Velcro pieces or suction cups to modify grip
- Modify gross motor equipment: adapted tricycles, prone crawlers, adapted swings and see-saws
- Modify self-help equipment: rimmed tables, plates, trays, dishes; food guards, spill proof mugs, adapted toilets, assist rails, electric toothbrushes; use backward chaining techniques and teach self transfer techniques
- Encourage use of symbol boards and other symbolic forms of communication for the non-verbal child
- Center use is very appropriate since it reduces the need for movement once the child is in a center area
- Water and sand play is excellent for children with fine motor difficulties. Provide a variety of containers; some with handles, some without, some with spouts, some with large openings, some with small; also provide different size sponges. Tie containers to water table with string
- Allow the child extra time
- Proper positioning is critical; use adaptive chairs, positioning bolsters and wedges, prone standers, bean bag chairs, standing tables
- Make facility physically accessible by providing ramps, curb cuts, railings, etc.
- Arrange furniture for mobility
- Keep toys and materials in open shelves easily reached by children unable to stand and/or in wheelchairs
- Arrange room to allow space for adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs, standers, walkers, communication devices
- Demonstrate special techniques or use of equipment to peers to maximize opportunities for sharing and interaction

6. Social-Emotional Abilities

- If the classroom is developmentally appropriate (i.e., a variety of materials/activities on various developmental levels) and children have a choice in determining what they will do, discipline problems will occur less often than in highly structured, teacher-directed, developmentally inappropriate environments
- Physical punishment is not used. Adults do not model aggression as a viable solution to problems: teachers communicate that aggression is not desirable under any circumstance
- Aggression is not ignored; adult permissiveness may lead to an increase in aggressiveness and may be taken as approval. Teachers use non-punitive forms of control such as:
  - Restructuring the environment by removing materials or adding more materials
  - Offering choices
  - Redirecting behavior
  - Giving positive instructions, i.e., "touch gently" rather than "don't hit"
  - Using natural consequences and verbal praise for appropriate behavior instead of primary reinforcers and external rewards
  - Encouraging problem solving; helping children negotiate by asking them to identify their problem, generate alternatives, predict consequences of alternatives and to make a decision regarding what to do or say
  - Setting up rituals and routines to give children a sense of security
  - Avoiding ultimatums
  - Children are encouraged to use words to express feelings as well as work out differences. Teachers actively assist them in finding the right words
  - Removing the child from the current activity, explain the rules and give the child the chance to try again; repeat, if necessary
  - Reinforcing appropriate behavior with preferred activities and privileges
  - Being persistent and consistent
- Helpfulness and cooperation are encouraged and reinforced, with the benefits of such behavior emphasized and highly valued by adults
- Adults intervene immediately with aggressive behavior before the aggressive behavior has a chance to "pay off" for the aggressor
- Play is not permitted to escalate from prosocial play to the point where children get knocked down, tripped or hurt and end up fighting. Children are helped to reduce rough play before it goes too far, instead of punishing the aggressive child
- Teachers recognize the difference between intentional aggressiveness and behavior that results in unintended accidents as result of too much enthusiasm
- Teachers suggest and model different alternatives to problem situations and work toward expanding behavior repertoire of children
- Adults are willing to play with children to help them learn to play and to provide models of alternatives to aggressive behavior such as using words instead of fists
- Potentially disruptive children are positioned for positive interaction and management
- Children are permitted to express their feelings verbally no matter how negative they may sound
- As children interact, the teacher suggests ways for them to help each other

- Socially withdrawn children are invited and encouraged by adults to play. Adults initiate play with social isolates and then encourage more socially competent children to join in
- Adults give children advance notice of an activity or schedule change and give adequate lead time prior to transitions
- Adults guide children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for behavior
- Adults value mistakes as learning opportunities
- Adults listen when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Adults patiently remind children of rules and why rules are needed

V.

Curricular Implications

A. General Curricular Implications

1. Summary Chart

The following summary chart was the product of a brainstorming session by the authors to bridge the theory into practice process that all educators face when trying to translate philosophy into curricular implications for classroom use.

Four areas selected as key components to be considered when designing a classroom for a community of learners are environment, activities/materials, adults, and children. Characteristics for each of these components are listed to help envision the general curricular implications of the EC-SPEED philosophy.

Environment	Activities/Materials	Adults	Children
Child-Centered	Individualized	Provide Choice	Active Learners
Play-based	Adaptive	Warm/Nurturing	Intrinsically Motivated
Enabling (Accessibility)	Modified	Conversant	Chose Own Activities
	Hands-on	Facilitate Cooperation	Conceptual Learners
Language Rich	Interest-Centered	Respectful	Problem Solvers
Responsive	Real/Natural	Interactive	Decision Makers
Thematic Orientation	Choices	Observant	Construct Own Knowledge
Learning Areas	Variety	Make and Record Observation	Relaxed, Happy
Social Atmosphere	Self-selected	Individualize	
Safe	Experiential	Consider "Whole Child" Development	
	Discovery-Oriented	Relaxed, Happy	
	Applied		
	Integrated		
	Consider "Whole Child" Development		

2. Sample Half-Day Schedule

The following sample daily schedule is just one example used in a half day early childhood education program. Some important factors in scheduling time for young children include respect for children's choice, variety of group settings, sufficient blocks of time for activities and transition, and emphasis on child development rather than academic progress.

9:00 - 9:10 Attendance
Discussion of the new day
Sharing time - listening to friends

9:10 - 10:20	Free-choice activities - 1. Discovery Table 2. Woodworking Bench 3. Easel Painting 4. Sand/Water Play 5. Reading Center 6. Family Living Area 7. Manipulative Activities 8. Writing Center 9. Art Area
10:20 - 10:25	Clean-up Time (transition)
10:25 - 10:40	Story
10:40 - 10:55	Snack (served "family style")
10:55 - 11:25	Large Muscle Time - in gym or outside
11:25 - 11:30	Preparation for Departure

3. Room Arrangement Considerations

A primary consideration related to room arrangement is the amount of space available for the program participants. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) suggests 35 square feet for each child. Research has concluded that a high density of children contributes to discipline problems, less social play, and more unoccupied behavior (Rohe & Patterson, 1974: Smith & Connolly, 1980). Restricted space, plus crowded conditions near supply areas, tend to increase conflicts (Hendrick, 1984). So, the entire classroom space must be adequate for the total number of children in the program, while individual learning areas must have enough space available for child movement/activity related to the area and available materials, as well as storage for an ample supply of those materials.

Another consideration deals with separating learning areas with high activity levels. Activity levels of learning areas will differ from one center and/or group of children to another. Program adults need to observe how much activity occurs in their centers' areas. High activity levels areas should be separated so that children don't try to use the same space for different activities which may lead to conflict.

Areas with disparate noise levels also need to be separated. Woodworking areas tend to be quite noisy with hammers and saws being wielded by young children. Therefore this area should be removed from a reading/listening area or solitary respite area since hammering and sawing may interfere greatly with reading, listening to a tape, or trying to relax.

In order to help children identify areas and associate these areas with certain expectations or rules, learning areas should be defined by illustrations, signs, color, floor coverings, etc. If each area has a defined space, children will be able to associate that space with such ideas as typical activities, boundaries, participants allowed in the area, and area rules, giving them a better understanding of the program's operation.

The traffic patterns among and between the learning areas are also an important consideration. Accessibility of all areas to all children is a major concern. Ample pathways for children with orthopedic disabilities is a must, however, large, open spaces tend to cause running and other disruptive behaviors, so the use of room barriers or dividers is often needed. These traffic detours can be bulletin boards, low bookcases, storage shelves, family living appliances, and tables. Such detours cause children to plan their routes, slow their pace, and go around, rather than through, learning areas being used by other children.

As mentioned earlier, a quiet respite or retreat area can be a valuable spot for children who may be irritable, anxious, or in need of rest and relaxation. This area needs to be soft, cozy, quiet, comfortable and out-of-the-way. Most people have a favorite spot to unwind. Designating such an area in your center will give young children a chance to gain composure, self-control, or merely a rest.

Floor coverings are another classroom consideration. Both carpeting and tile are needed coverings. Some areas, such as the reading area, call for carpet because of children's choices of reading postures on the floor. The block area calls for carpet to muffle the noise of falling blocks. Areas like the art area or sand/water table area are best situated on tile for easier cleaning.

The availability of water for activities such as art and the water table, as well as the clean-up of children, materials, and areas is also a necessity. The existing water supply may dictate the placement of some learning areas.

External and internal light is also another important consideration. Some areas call for more light than others; examples being the reading area, writing area, and art area. If the existing external light is insufficient, the placement of these areas in the best-lighted areas of the room may be necessary.

Accessibility of materials for young children to use is a room arrangement factor that is also vital. Materials must be on-hand and easy-to-get if children are to sustain motivation, generate a variety of ideas, or join forces on the same project. All children need to be able to access all materials and return them to their respective place of storage. Such get-and-return accessibility develops independence, self-responsibility, creativity, and problem-solving.

The final consideration in this section deals with providing space for all children to display their work at their eye level. Displaying children's work suggests its worthiness, which helps self-esteem, and promotes conversation, both child-child and child-adult, that leads to increased language development. It also motivates children to complete other products for display.

B. Specific Curricular Implications

The following specific curricular implications correspond to curricular/ program elements in the EC-SPEED Early Childhood Special Education Design and Program Evaluation Guide. The numbers appearing before each goal relate to the numbers used to identify the corresponding item in the EC-SPEED. Each separate item includes a goal statement, a best practice statement, four types of classroom implications drawn from the goal and best practice statements, and best practice examples observed at exemplary early childhood centers during the course of the Ohio Department of Education Preschool Service Delivery Project. The implications concern what effect the best practice statement will have on the learning environment, the activities and materials used, program adult behavior, and the behavior of children in the program.

1. Intradomain Goals

The curriculum and instructional methodology reflect a celebratory attitude toward human diversity in the following ways (16.2a-d):

▶ GOAL

16.2a Opportunities for the inclusion and celebration of diverse human abilities are integrated throughout instructional methodology, activities, and materials.

Best Practice

The classroom community is celebratory concerning diverse human abilities. People representing a wide range of human abilities such as gifted and talented through severely disabled in all developmental domains are included. The variety of human abilities in the classroom community reflects the variety found in the local community served. Significant program modifications are observed that indicate all members of the classroom community are celebrated for their unique contributions to the group signifying a truly reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationship.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Demonstrates celebration/ appreciation of diverse human abilities
- Encourages and nurtures the unique qualities of individuals regardless of ability

PHYSICAL

- Is purposedly designed to provide opportunities for the interaction of humans with diverse abilities
- Is purposedly designed to ensure full participation of humans with diverse abilities

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Literature, posters, and other materials (dolls, puppets, dress-up clothing) portray humans with diverse abilities in an accurate (unbiased) and positive light
- High interest activities/materials are available for children of all abilities in order to motivate their participation
- Songs, games, cooking, all learning areas are open to *all* children; in fact children are encouraged to participate in *all* activities
- Activities and materials are modified/adapted so that all children can experience success daily

C. ADULTS

- Use verbal statements that demonstrate the appreciation/ celebration of individuals with diverse abilities
- Carefully select unbiased children's literature, display items, materials, and activities related to diverse human abilities
- Model celebratory attitudes toward the inclusion of diverse human abilities
- Answer children's questions about ability directly and honestly to the extent the question was asked, and with sensitivity toward the truly reciprocal, mutually beneficial nature of human relationships
- Reinforce verbal statements and behavior that reflect positive attitudes about human diversity
- Create opportunities for interaction between humans with diverse abilities
- Implement program hiring practices which include the possibility of qualified adults with disabilities on staff

D. CHILDREN

- Have opportunities to choose to be involved in a variety of activities
- Interact with people of diverse abilities
- Experience success daily regardless of ability

Example

Northwest Child Development Center, Seattle, Washington

Ryan's classroom community is celebratory concerning diverse human abilities. People representing a wide range of human abilities are members of this classroom community learning and growing together, enriching each other's lives. Ryan is a young boy who is blind, fed through a stomach tube, and non-ambulatory and being moved around the center in an adaptive wagon. One of the program's goals for Ryan was that he respond to tactile stimuli. This goal was met during a daily routine that involved Ryan's "friends," his typically developing twin sister and teacher rubbing lotion on his skin to minimize the chance of bed sores because of lack of movement. We felt privileged to witness the natural nurturance and caring extended to Ryan by his "friends" which culminated in a bright smile on his face in reaction to the pleasurable sensation of their touch thus meeting the above-mentioned goal. Ryan's achievement was met by a celebration that was center-wide. Such celebration, however, is not limited to just children in this center. For appreciation of diverse abilities even extends to the hiring of adults with disabilities as paid aides. Mary, an adult with Downs Syndrome, is appreciated for her unique and beneficial contributions to the program. Ryan and Mary enrich, as well as benefit, from such an environment by demonstrating how variety enhances a truly reciprocal, mutually beneficial classroom community. Most people perceive school environments as a reflection of society. We, however, suggest that classrooms such as this provide a model for society that is a truly integrated, inclusionary, pluralistic, community of active, lifelong learners who celebrate human diversity.

▶ GOAL

16.2b Opportunities for the inclusion and celebration of diverse age groups are integrated throughout instructional methodology, activities, and materials

Best Practices

Multi-age groupings are the norm. Three, four, and five year olds interact and work with each other by choice. No children are excluded from activities/materials because of age, and materials/activities are modified so that all students experience success. Organized, frequent attempts are made to promote intergenerational interaction through real and vicarious experiences both within and outside the educational environment.

Suggested Classroom Implication

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Demonstrates celebration/appreciation of diverse ages
- Encourages and nurtures the contributions of individuals regardless of age

PHYSICAL

- Is designed to provide opportunities for the interaction of humans of all ages
- The physical environment, including unique furnishings, is designed to ensure participation of all ages

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Literature, posters, and other materials portray humans of diverse ages in an accurate (non-stereotypical) and positive light
- Exploration/celebration of diverse human ages is accomplished through:
  - multi-age grouping
  - modification of materials/activities
  - real and vicarious intergenerational experiences (e.g., foster grandparent program, adopting a home for retirees, retired people as volunteers and/or paid staff, hiring practices which seek older adults, elementary, high school, and university students as aides, literature and films with intergenerational interaction as a theme)

C. ADULTS

- Use verbal statements and model attitudes/behaviors that demonstrate the appreciation/celebration of people of all ages
- Recognize and reinforce the unique contributions of people of all ages
- Carefully select non-stereotypical children's literature, display items, materials/activities that demonstrate a celebration/appreciation of the unique contribution of people of all ages
- Promote multi-age grouping and intergenerational interaction

D. CHILDREN

- Have both primary and vicarious experiences with people of diverse ages
- Have opportunities to nurture and be nurtured and to lead and be led through multi-age grouping and intergenerational interaction
- Use verbal statements and model attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate the appreciation/celebration of people of all ages

Example

Miami Valley Child Development Center, Dayton, Ohio

The celebration of diverse age interaction is an important element of the program at the Miami Valley Child Development Center in Dayton, Ohio. Not only are children of three, four, and five years of age grouped together for all program activities, but adults across a wide range of ages are interacting with children on a daily basis. We believe multi-age grouping is important so that children have the chance to nurture, as well be nurtured, and to lead, as well as be led. It also reduces the risk of having expectations for children set by their age. An integral adult at the Miami Valley program is the veteran cook who prepares snacks and meals for the children and staff. She not only prepares the food; she interacts with the children so that while they help serve themselves she has a chance to share how the food was prepared and what its nutritional value is. Her long-time friend is also a regular visitor at the center who was often observed sitting in a rocking chair comforting, reading to, or conversing with young children. Such intergenerational activity promotes knowledge about, and appreciation of, diverse ages for both adults and children.

▶ GOAL

16.2c Diversified gender opportunities are integrated throughout instructional methodology, activities, and materials.

Best Practice

All adults use verbal statements that suggest, and materials that portray, diversified gender roles. All activities are open to both genders. All children are encouraged to participate in all activities regardless of gender.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Demonstrates celebration/ appreciation of gender diversity
- Encourages and nurtures the unique qualities of individuals regardless of gender

PHYSICAL
- Reflects diversified gender opportunities

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Literature, posters, and other materials (dolls, puppets, dress-up clothing) portray diversified gender opportunities in an accurate (unbiased) and positive light
- High interest activities/materials invite children of both genders to participate
- Exploration of diversified gender opportunities are extended by: a) career awareness field trips selected with sensitivity to non-stereotypical gender-roles, b) resource people who reflect diversified gender opportunities/abilities
- Songs, games, cooking, all learning areas are open to *all* children, in fact children are encouraged to participate in all activities

C. ADULTS

- Use verbal statements that demonstrate the appreciation/ celebration of individuals, their abilities and opportunities regardless of gender
- Carefully select unbiased children's literature, display items, materials, and activities related to diversified gender roles/ opportunities
- Model roles, interests, abilities that demonstrate gender diversity
- Do not use reverse discrimination when making points about gender
- Answer children's questions about gender directly and honestly to the extent the question was asked, and with sensitivity to the wishes of the parents
- Reinforce verbal statements and behavior that reflect positive attitudes about gender diversity
- Create opportunities for social interaction between genders

D. CHILDREN

- *All* children have opportunities to be involved in all activities
- Experiment with a variety of gender diversified roles and materials

Example

Hopewell SERRC, Hillsboro, Ohio

In Hillsboro, Ohio, it's shopping day in the Wilmington Preschool family living area. This day a child is selecting just the right apparel for an excursion to the mall. The Mickey Mouse oversized tee will be just perfect. Now to accessorize in order to enhance and complete the look: popbeads, plastic watch, and a vinyl purse ... how chic! And now for the crowning touch, a hat. Let's see the one with ribbons? No. The one with feathers, no. Kelly finally chooses a bright yellow construction hard hat. Ah ha! Just what every girl needs. The perfect touch especially if one needs to deflect flying debris at a moonlight madness sale. After all, if it's OK for Larry to wear a fetching red dress to do his laundry, then it's certainly OK for Kelly to wear a hard hat when she goes shopping.

▶ GOAL

16.2d The exploration and appreciation of diverse cultures is integrated throughout instructional methodology, activities, and materials.

Best Practice

Exploration of diverse cultures takes place both inside and outside of the educational (center/home) environment by using resource people, cultural events, and cultural materials. Children are exposed to important elements of many cultures. The educational materials used depict many different cultures.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Demonstrates celebration/ appreciation of cultural objects, artifacts, literature, music, art, foods, etc.
- Encourages and nurtures the unique cultural qualities of individuals

PHYSICAL
- Exposes program participants to a variety of unique cultural diversity
- The influence of diverse cultures is naturally integrated into learning areas and throughout themes

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Literature, posters, and other materials (dolls, puppets, dress-up clothing) portray diverse cultures in an accurate (unbiased) and positive light
- Children are exposed to cultural uniqueness by:
  - background music
  - cultural snacks
  - displayed artworks, literature, photographs
  - culturally appropriate dress-up clothing
  - cross-language labeling of natural classroom objects
  - cultural displays
  - dolls and toys representing diverse cultures
- The exploration of cultural diversity is extended by:
  - cultural opportunities/field trips outside the center
  - resource people invited into the center to share their culture and/or cultural expertise
- Children are actively involved in culture-specific activities with culture-specific materials, such as:
  - games
  - songs
  - cooking
  - drama, folklore
  - child-made cultural products, e.g., mosaics, Russian eggs, weaving, musical instruments

C. ADULTS

- Use children's experience, prior knowledge, interest, and curiosity as a basis for cultural exploration
- Use verbal statements that demonstrate the appreciation/ celebration of cultural diversity

- Recognize and reinforce the unique cultural qualities of people
- Display child-made cultural products
- Extend personal knowledge/experience of various cultures through research
- Carefully select unbiased children's literature, display items, materials, and activities
- Get beyond a "tourist approach" to the study of culture by integrating the beauty of cultural diversity

D. CHILDREN

- Have both primary and vicarious cultural experiences such as dance, songs, games, cooking, dress-up, and child-initiated creative drama
- Experiment with a variety of cultural media, materials, and methods
- Share their cultural experiences and expertise in celebratory and non-exploitive ways
- Share and display cultural items they have gathered and/or made to enhance the programs' cultural exploration

Example

Westside Public School District #66, Omaha, Nebraska

Typically a study of a culture is often limited to a stereotypical custom, dish, or native costume, none of which may be an accurate reflection of that people. In isolation, these may be important cultural elements, however, children gain a much better understanding of a culture if we help them get beyond the "exotic" features and to discover that a culture is made up of people with hopes and dreams, needs and wants, fears and sorrows, joys and triumphs both similar to and different from their own.

Omaha, Nebraska, may seem like an unlikely place to see conch shells, coconuts, and cruise wear, but all of these were part of a week long exploration of the Hawaiian culture at The Westside Community Early Childhood Center. For a full week, children had first-hand experiences with various aspects of Hawaiian culture. Children felt, shook, cut open, tasted, chipped, cooked with, and even painted a unique and beautiful mural with coconuts and pineapples. They made their own snacks by spreading papaya and other tropical fruit jellies on crackers while traditional island music played in the background. The sand table became a beach where children searched for sea shells. Children were able to dress in a variety of Hawaiian apparel, both native and modern. They were introduced to the language of Hawaii through stories, songs, and the dual labeling of their preschool environment. Another activity the children particularly enjoyed was the planning of a trip to Hawaii. This trip is discussed in the theme section of this curriculum guide on pages 92 and 93.

2. Physical Development

▶ GOAL

17.1 Children have opportunities for daily, scheduled and supervised, indoor and outdoor motor activities.

Best Practice

Children are provided with daily, scheduled and supervised indoor and outdoor activities with individualization for children's exceptionality and tolerance. These child-specific activities occur without removal from the integrated natural learning environment.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is a safe, yet challenging environment which encourages responsible risk-taking
- Invites spontaneous motor activity motivated by children's interest
- Supports on-going physical activity
- Motor activities not limited to prescribed areas or times
- Ensures physical success of all children regardless of ability

PHYSICAL

- Is accessible to *all* children
- Is child-interest centered
- Safety concerns are primary
- Is attractive, colorful, clean, and inviting
- Motor development is not restricted to traditional playground/gym areas, rather it is evident in all learning areas and spaces (e.g., creative use of levels of existing space, natural outdoors areas, block area, sand/water table, housekeeping/dress-up)
- Outdoor environment is an extension of indoor environment (e.g., message board, water play, easels, housekeeping) by using motor activities traditionally considered to be for indoors outside

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Sample gross motor activities/materials include: parachute, obstacle course, riding and climbing equipment, digging toys, moveable parts, construction materials
- Sample fine motor activities/materials include: play doh, finger paint, puzzles, water play, manipulatives
- Include sensory experiences (integration of senses)
- Include movement/balance/coordination/rhythm (balance beam, music and beat, slinky, rhythm instruments, rhymes, eye/hand)
- Variety ensures participation and success of *all* children (adaptive equipment and materials)
- Include a balance of active and quiet activities
- Purposeful arrangement of materials to aid classroom management
- Promote social interaction and cooperation (food preparation, large objects, clean-up routine)

C. ADULTS

- Schedule daily, indoor and outdoor, muscle activities if possible
- Create environment for daily physical development of *all* children that is integrated across all learning areas and physical spaces
- Observe individual children's gross and fine motor development frequently in order to plan future activities and monitor progress
- Facilitate and extend children's play through modeling, questioning, and encouragement

D. CHILDREN

- *All* children have opportunities to be involved in all activities regardless of abilities
- Have impact on the environment by moving, rearranging, redesigning, reconstructing, dismantling, etc. all of which involve motor activity and challenge their emerging physical abilities
- Express pleasure and joy inherent in physical activity
- Have opportunities for group physical activity, social interaction during physical activity, and cooperative physical activity

Example

Bank Street Family Center, New York City, New York

An example of including children with deficits in motor abilities is a movement class in New York City, the mecca for the performing arts. In the Big Apple such a class is no big deal, except for the fact that this movement class is attended by three, four, and five year old children. Even more unusual is the inclusion of children with disabling conditions that would tend to limit their movement, not allowing them to fully participate in the planned activities. At Bank Street Family Center this is not the case. Children like Gina, who is unable to walk without assistance and uses a wheel chair for much of her ambulation, are encouraged and helped to participate in every movement activity. We observed wonderful parachute activities that Gina was involved in because of the creativity and physical help of the educators in the group.

The staff modified one activity by having children pretend they were fish swimming on a large multi-colored parachute. A song was used that invited all children on a selected color of the parachute to "swim" to the middle of the parachute then "swim" back to its outer edge. Gina was able to do this physically, plus the movement certainly helped her gross motor development.

An example of physical effort by the staff to help Gina occurred during the next activity. It was a typical parachute activity where the children marched around the outside of the parachute moving it up and down with both hands by following musical cues and verbal directions. Gina's teacher marched around holding Gina at a point level with the other students, so Gina, eyes wide and smiling joyfully, was able to fully participate in this fun by "marching" with her friends.

▶ GOAL

17.2 Children have opportunities for daily fine motor activities that relate to children's interests and natural play.

Best Practice

Children have opportunities for daily, planned, fine motor activities that are child-specific, exceptionality appropriate, and otherwise integrated into children's natural play. The child-specific activities occur without removal from the integrated natural learning environment.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Invites spontaneous fine motor activity motivated by children's interests
- Ensures physical success of *all* children regardless of ability

PHYSICAL

- Visual, tactile, and size/space accessibility for all children
- Space provides individual, as well as group, fine motor activity
- Is attractive, colorful, clean, and inviting
- Traditional indoor fine motor activities extended to outdoor setting (small objects added to sand/water, outdoor snacks)
- Has appropriate sized and adaptive furnishings

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Use of natural materials such as leaves, pine cones, sticks, stones
- Materials are complete, in good repair, provide for a variety of developmental levels, plentiful enough to ensure choice and longevity of play
- Changed frequently to ensure novelty and relationship to children's interests
- Materials motivate both individual and group play
- Fine motor activities integrated throughout all learning areas
- Adaptive materials (scissors, pencil grips) for children with disabilities
- Planned around children's expressed interests
- Activities planned for both sensory and fine motor value (oobleck, play doh, soap suds, shaving cream, sand)
- Used without frequent adult-direction and facilitates self-evaluation

C. ADULTS

- Use natural materials and environment to incorporate therapeutic goals of individual children after they have chosen an activity or shown interest in a material
- Observe individual fine motor development frequently in order to plan future activities and monitor progress

- Create fine motor situations for each learning area (small cars in sand, different fastening devices on clothes, supplemental materials for water play)
- Encourage experimentation and exploration of materials, use strategies such as modeling and coaching for reluctant children
- Use children's interest to develop fine motor activities (hobbies)
- Allow children to use materials in divergent ways

D. CHILDREN

- *All* children have opportunities to be involved in all activities regardless of abilities
- Use materials in divergent ways
- Self-select activities
- Use a variety of fine motor materials daily
- Work in groups or individually with fine motor materials

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont,
Merricats Castle Preschool, New York City and
Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

You've probably all seen typical volcano activities in preschools that last for about ten minutes. A volcano made years ago is hauled out of a closet, children are gathered around it to see the volcano spew forth after a teacher pours chemicals into its top. A few gasps, several oh's and ah's, and other exclamations are heard, then the children disperse as the volcano is shelved for another year. Pretty meaningless wouldn't you say? This isn't what we observed at the Vermont College Preschool. The teachers there know how important it is to have activities that catch child's interest while helping their development across domains.

The volcano activity in Vermont lasted for days as part of a dinosaur unit. Children made the volcano themselves in their water table by shredding pieces of paper and making paper-mache to affix to a chicken wire frame. They placed these strips on the frame, let them dry, and then painted their creation. After the volcano was painted children used natural materials such as leaves, pebbles, pine twigs, and sand to make it look more authentic. Children not only expressed themselves creatively during this portion of the activity, they were also using a variety of fine motor skills in the process. Once the volcano was complete, it was used as the focus for a circle time discussion that culminated in a colorful eruption. After circle time the volcano became a part of the room where children could do creative microspheric play with plastic dinosaurs.

At the Merricats Castle Preschool in New York another typical preschool activity, making the daily snack, was used to facilitate children's fine motor development. Children made fruit salad and topped rice cakes with peanut butter, raisins, mini-marshmalllows, and the like. The teachers engaged the youngsters in discussion about the ingredients while the children used plastic knives to cut bananas, chop sliced apples, and spread peanut butter. They also pulled grapes from the stem, mixed the fruit salad, doled out the mixture, and used spoons to eat it. All natural, all fun, all purposeful, and a great way to help eye-hand and fine motor development. Fine motor development doesn't have to be limited to indoor play either.

At Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, Florida, a veranda is used to extend typical fine motor indoor play to the out-of-doors. We watched children choose from a variety of activities like working with oobleck, shaving cream, and the sand table. Being close to Halloween, children seemed to especially enjoy digging for various sized plastic spiders in the sand. The staff also introduced pots and pans, plus small toys and figurines like trucks and dinosaurs outside, off the veranda, in sandy, grass-covered, or dirt areas to encourage fine motor, microspheric play. Fine motor development can be encouraged both outdoors and indoors if children's interests and natural play tendencies are considered.

▶ GOAL

17.3 During the course of individual children's patterns of growth, a gross motor to fine motor developmental sequence is followed.

Best Practice

The daily, scheduled gross motor and fine motor activities are individualized for children beginning with gross motor and preceding to fine motor according to each child's developmental pattern.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Encourages and invites physical activity
- Is one of challenge and success, rather than frustration and failure
- Promotes safe/reasonable "risk taking"

PHYSICAL

- Considers individual children's safety, developmental level and abilities, interests, and tolerance for physical activity
- Organized room arrangement and traffic pattern that considers individual exceptionalities and available space
- Facilities are clean and aesthetically pleasing
- Space to meet needs of each participating child

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Start at the range of proficiency for the children involved and proceed to levels that will challenge and motivate development in gross and fine motor areas
- Allow all children to develop gross motor proficiency needed as a basis for later fine motor development
- Ensure participation of all children through variety and number of activities/materials
- Reflect children's interests

C. ADULTS

- Give positive, but accurate, feedback
- Select activities/materials with children's interests in mind
- Expect and motivate children's gross and fine motor activity
- Observe children in order to evaluate/reevaluate curricular decisions/planning, meet IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals, sense extension or "natural" closure of activities, ensure safety, motivate "risk taking," and provide emotional support
- Use both the indoor and outdoor learning environment for physical development

D. CHILDREN

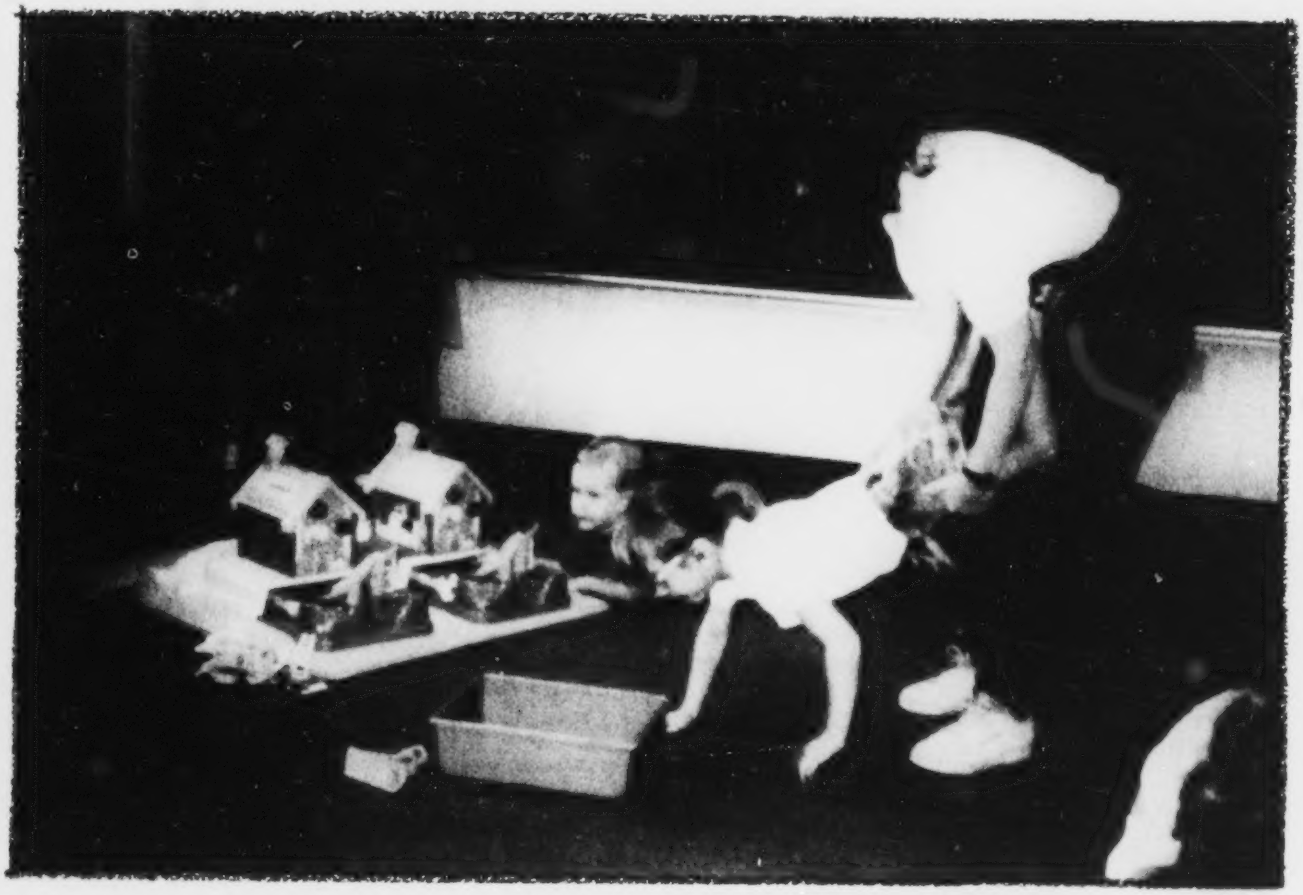
- Self-select activities related to their interest and ability
- Experience success in both gross and fine motor activities
- Are involved in individual, small group, and large group physical activities

- Can impact and change their physical environment
- First develop gross motor proficiency that serves as a basis for later fine motor success

Example

Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

Creative Preschool has an entire room devoted to microspheric play; play that is meant to foster creativity and fine motor development. Rachel, a mild cerebral palsy child with a vision disability, is busily working a play cash register with a few other youngsters while an occupational therapist (OT) asked questions related to the number and color of plastic coins. In this room, children self-select a variety of high interest activities. When Rachel tired of the cash register play she selected another activity across the room. Her OT, realizing Rachel's need for upper body development made this transition time both fun and beneficial by making Rachel walk on her hands wheelbarrow-style while the OT held her legs. This transition activity occurred several times that morning. We believe this to be an excellent example of an educator realizing a child's gross motor to fine motor sequence and capitalizing on a teachable moment to encourage an important gross motor activity during what is typically regarded as a time for fine motor activity.



▶ GOAL

17.4 The indoor area for gross motor activities is safe and includes sufficient space and a variety of supplemental play materials/adaptive equipment.

Best Practice

Equipment/materials are safe and in good repair. Surfaces beneath and around indoor equipment are adequate to prevent injuries. The indoor space is at least seventy-five square feet per child. The equipment/materials motivate spontaneous play, encourage use without frequent adult direction, provide enough equipment/materials to meet needs of participating children, are the appropriate size and are accessible to participating children with disabilities. Adaptive equipment is provided for individual exceptionalities.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Promotes safe/reasonable "risk taking"
- Ample space provides free movement
- Encourages/invites physical activity
- Time allotment allows engagement of children in activities for sufficient periods of time
- Is pervaded by a feeling of fun, excitement, and success

PHYSICAL
- 75 square feet of available space per child using the space
- Meets applicable safety, fire, and health regulations
- Should not be limited to a "traditional" large muscle area (gym)
- Considers the special needs of *all* children (pathways, visual/tactile cues)
- Has a variety of floor surfaces
- Mats provided for "fall areas"
- Room arrangement ensures full visual scan by adults

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Motivate a full range of activities across the gross motor development continuum
- Adapted to needs of all participating children (trikes, turtle scooters, etc.)
- Variety (amount and levels) of materials/equipment ensures participation of *all* children
- Invite individual, small group, and large group play
- Sample materials/activities might include: climbing apparatus, riding toys, parachute, big blocks, work bench, sand/water table, ball assortment, tunnels, hula hoops, etc.
- Frequent change of materials
- Encourage creative use of materials
- Provide opportunities for children to change and impact their environment

C. ADULTS

- Interact with children to encourage, enrich, and extend children's play
- Observe to evaluate children's developmental progress for curricular modifications and to promote/ensure safety

- Model use of equipment/materials
- Create a safe, inviting environment that motivates gross motor activity
- Consider individual gross motor needs of *all* children
- Integrate IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals into gross motor activities
- Use the indoor space as an extension of the outdoor environment
- Provide opportunities which allow children to impact and change their environment
- Set and maintain consistent physical, social, and boundary limits for children while still allowing choice and experimentation

D. CHILDREN

- Self-select gross motor activities
- Demonstrate success with activities/materials/equipment
- Demonstrate enjoyment with the activities they are involved in
- Are involved in individual, small group, and large group play
- Participate in a variety of gross motor activities
- Change and impact their environment by: moving, constructing, rearranging, dismantling aspects of their environment

Example

Western Oregon State University Preschool, Monmouth, Oregon and
Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

One of the best equipped indoor gross motor areas we saw on our travels was at the Western Oregon State University Preschool. An entire well-padded, high-ceiling room was filled with materials and equipment for gross motor activity such as several suspended adapted rope swings, an enormous selection of balls, climbing equipment with a heavily padded fall area, a basketball backboard and hoop, and many materials for movement activities. Their space was large and safe, and invited large muscle play. However, not many centers would have the luxury of such a well-equipped room dedicated for gross motor activities.

The Vermont College Preschool is one program that doesn't have such a room, but they make the best use of the available space they do have. Right in their classrooms, the Vermont staff makes great use of different physical levels for children to climb up, slide down, crawl through, and maneuver around. The levels are raised, graduated wooden platforms with access ladders and ramps. Many of the platforms are carpeted and interconnected. We observed many children frequently using these leveled platforms for physical activity or for nooks and crannies to rest in.

The Vermont staff also made great use of a wide hallway that the three classrooms emptied into. The hallway was wide enough to be a track for an assortment of wheeled, riding toys. It had directional arrows on the floor and street scenes, including parking meters and signs painted on the wall. So, a space that could have merely been used as a hallway to classrooms has been transformed to a decorated street scene with young children riding to and fro.

Oregon has a beautiful space to use a variety of creative gross motor materials and activities, while Vermont makes creative use of the limited space they have. Both programs provide indoor opportunities for children's gross motor development.

▶ GOAL

17.5 The outdoor area for gross motor activities is safe and includes sufficient space and a variety of supplemental play materials/adaptive equipment.

Best Practice

The equipment/materials are safe and in good repair, surfaces beneath outdoor equipment are adequate to prevent injuries, and the outdoor space is at least seventy-five square feet per child. The equipment/materials motivate spontaneous play, encourage use without frequent adult direction, and provide enough equipment/materials to meet needs of participating children. The equipment/materials are appropriate size and are accessible to participating children with disabilities. Adaptive equipment is provided for individual exceptionalities.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Promotes safe/reasonable "risk taking"
- Ample space provides free movement
- Encourages/invites physical activity
- Time allotment allows children's engagement in activities for sufficient periods of time
- Is pervaded by a feeling of fun, excitement, and success

PHYSICAL

- 75 sq. feet of space per participating child
- Is enclosed to prevent children from leaving the premises so that they do not get into unsafe/unsupervised areas
- Is free of hazards
- Has varied surfaces for such activities as running (grass), wheeled toys (hard surface), and climbing (sand)
- Includes elements of the natural world (plant/animal life, water)
- Considers special needs of *all* children

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Motivate a full range of activities across the gross motor development continuum
- Are adapted to needs of all participating children
- Ensure participation of *all* children through variety (amount and levels) of materials/equipment
- Invite individual, small group, and large group play
- Materials are changed frequently
- Encourage creative use of materials
- Provide opportunities for children to change and impact their environment
- Sample activities/materials might include: climbing apparatus, riding toys, parachute, construction materials (big blocks, crates, boxes, wood, interlocking pieces, plastic grates), balance beams

C. ADULTS

- Interact with children to encourage, enrich, and extend children's play

- Observe to evaluate children's developmental progress for curricular modification and to promote/ensure safety
- Model use of equipment/materials
- Create a safe, inviting environment that motivates gross motor activity
- Consider individual gross motor needs of *all* children
- Integrate IEP (individualized education program) goals into gross motor activities
- Use the outdoor space as an extension of the indoor space
- Provide opportunities that allow children to impact/change their environment
- Set and maintain consistent physical, social, and boundary limits for children while still allowing choice and experimentation

D. CHILDREN

- Self-select gross motor activities
- Demonstrate success with activities/materials/equipment
- Demonstrate enjoyment with the activities they are involved in
- Are involved in individual, small group, and large group play
- Participate in a variety of gross motor activities

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio and Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

Too often many preschools become the recipients of elementary school playgrounds that they have inherited as a result of operating out of existing or vacated school buildings. Such playgrounds are usually developmentally inappropriate, as well as dangerous. Many have concrete or blacktop as a base, are riddled with sharp edges and exposed bolts, and contain equipment like swings, high slides, and teeter-totters that are not suitable for young children because of their size or the activity they motivate.

Two excellent exceptions we observed were the outside playgrounds at Arlitt Child Development Center and Creative Preschool.

The Arlitt Center has a hard-surface playground that is partially covered by the building's overhang so that children can play outside during inclement weather. The space is gigantic with many lanes for wheeled riding toys that are defined by padded wooden borders. Outdoor apparatus includes climbing equipment and outdoor, wall-mounted climbing pegs padded with Astro-turf around the fall zones. There is also a large sandbox that can be covered to keep out cats, etc. The area is enclosed by a high chain link fence for the children's safety. The entire area is brightened by colorful murals depicting outdoor scenes. Since Arlitt is in an urban area the program lacks a variety of adjacent surfaces and settings for outdoor play.

The Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, on the other hand, has an enormous outdoor play area that includes a hard surface area, grassy areas, and sandy areas. The outdoor space is enclosed and has shady spots for children to rest. The space is so large, and so well-equipped, that it includes a play house, an outdoor creative dramatics/home living area, a word-working area, a sand pit for play dinosaurs and other animals, and a block building/construction area. An amazing array of "spare parts" are available for these areas. At the Creative

Preschool the needs of young children are attended to. Their slide is built into an earthen mound for safety reasons, and is wide enough for two or three children to slide down together while socializing. Socialization is also considered when selecting swings. The Creative Preschool has large wooden porch-like swings so that many children can swing and talk at the same time. To top it off, they even have an animal farm where children are responsible for the feeding and care of goats, rabbits, ducks, chickens, and the like.

▶ GOAL

18.1 Children select activities within a teacher-planned learning environment.

Best Practice

Children have many activity choices within an environment planned by an adult with children's cognitive development in mind.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- A variety of activities, centers, themes, and areas are available for children that motivate them to think about the materials involved and what they are doing with the materials during the activities
- Is planned to allow *all* children intellectual access, to all activities

PHYSICAL

- Is planned to allow *all* children physical access, to all activities
- A physical management system allows a reasonable amount of children, related to space and available materials, to work in each learning area (example, picture of two children, two dots, three safety glasses, four smocks, etc.)

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Amount, variety, and developmental levels of activities and materials promote the participation of all children
- Children's interests and experiences are used for selection of activities and materials
- Are adopted to the individual needs of all participating children
- Complexity of materials promotes thinking about materials as well as acting upon them
- Are attractively presented/displayed to invite participation or pique interest of children
- Are planned for individual, small group, and large group participation
- Should be open-ended, multi-purposeful, and divergent

C. ADULTS

- Plan, select, and arrange activities and materials that will motivate children's interest, participation, and thinking
- Model the construction of knowledge related to specific activities/materials
- Participate in activities so that children's thinking may be extended beyond what they already know about the materials involved (questioning, suggesting alternatives, drawing analogous situations, etc.)
- Plan for future activities by observing and evaluating how children interact with present activities and materials
- Replenish and maintain materials on a daily basis
- Adapt materials and activities for use by all children
- Respect children's choices of activities and their use of materials
- Provide a balance of active-passive, and noisy-quiet activities

D. CHILDREN

- Select interesting activities on a daily basis
- Serve as "curricular informants" for program adults
- Think about what they are doing during activities
- Take responsibility for their own learning by planning and directing their own activity

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Two impressive elements of the Vermont Preschool were the amount of activities children had to choose from and how these activities engaged children. We observed no children waiting to use a material or join an activity for any length of time, and once they did begin an activity they tended to stick with it. During a farm theme unit, the staff had planned high interest activities such as building and inhabiting a large "nest," making crafts from feathers, observing live chickens in a classroom coop, reading *Green Eggs and Ham*, making fried eggs, singing farm-related songs, and painting each other's feet to make a "tracks" mural. Although children make up their own minds about what activities to be involved in, it's the educators that have planned the activities and designed the environment to get children thinking about what they are doing, therefore, facilitating cognitive development.

▶ GOAL

18.2 The materials used and activities done on a daily basis promote higher forms of thinking or elicit characteristics related to such thought.

Best Practice

Children are motivated to think *divergently, critically,* and *creatively.* Children's *curiosity* and *problem solving* are promoted.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Encourages risk-taking, guessing, spontaneity, a multiplicity of acceptable answers/products, and ideas
- Makes children feel safe and secure enough to question, explore, interact with, and manipulate their environment
- Encourages the free expression of *all* children

PHYSICAL

- Will undergo frequent modifications and changes to motivate exploration by children
- The complexity of the environment causes children to think "beyond the given"
- Unique use of a physical space and materials sets the tone for unique thoughts and actions (e.g., levels, nooks, crannies, lofts, unique items and artifacts that generate curiosity)

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Complexity of materials promotes thinking about materials as well as acting upon them
- Common and/or traditional activities are presented/displayed in unique ways to pique children's interest and curiosity (e.g., water table swamp, Plexiglass art table, overhead projector shadow, Plexiglass piano front, overturned piano bench used as a base for a prehistoric scene)
- Activities are open-ended promoting a variety of answers/responses
- Place children in problem-solving situations (e.g., problem solving during construction and dramatic play, children's daily planning)
- Materials abound to support children's ideas and construction plans
- Encourage children to analyze and evaluate cause and effect relationships

C. ADULTS

- Motivate, support, and nurture children's higher forms of thinking by:
  - respecting and valuing children's ideas
  - recognizing/praising unique thoughts/ideas/contributions of program participants
  - providing space/materials/time necessary for higher forms of thinking
  - designing an environment that encourages curiosity, exploration, and problem solving
- Model divergent thinking, critical thinking, curiosity, creativity, and problem solving

D. CHILDREN

- Freely express divergent, original, and unique ideas
- Demonstrate analytical and critical thinking
- Children's daily activities and interactions are driven by their natural curiosity
- Generate many responses to questions and problems that arise during the course of the day
- Seek answers to their own questions and the questions of others

Example

Westside Public School District #66, Omaha, Nebraska and Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Paper is a basic material in most preschools. It's used for drawing, cutting, painting, gluing, and folding. In our days we loved to fold paper into an airplane, usually to the dismay of our teachers. While in Omaha, we watched a young boy spend a long period of time fashioning paper airplanes, testing them, then modifying them to see if they would fly better. His persistence and creativity amazed us, as did the ability of his teacher to use questions to help him really think about what he was doing and to keep him motivated to continue this activity for a long time. This activity was no "follow the directions and get it done" task. The child initiated the activity because of his interest and was helped to "think through" and create because of an educator who could use questions well and supply supplemented materials that continued the child's interest in what he was doing.

Water is another material basic to preschool activities. Many programs are outfitted with water tables where children frequently experiment with the properties of water. At the Vermont College Preschool, however, they have "water tables plus"; plus tubing, plus funnels, plus hoses, plus pumps, plus added apparatus everywhere extending water play beyond the confines of the table itself. Raised tubing and funnels are attached to the ceiling with pulleys. Water flows from the water table to smaller tubs on the floor through plastic hoses. Children are free to divert the water flow and experiment with a variety of "plumbing" extensions from their classroom water table. Such an environment allows children to try solving the problems they find daily. Only their imagination limits them.

▶ GOAL

18.3 The learning activities relate to the "real world" of the child.

Best Practice

The general interests of young children, and individual interests of children in the program, are considered when planning activities. Adults recognize "teachable moments" and use them for incidental learning. Children "discover" concepts and information during "hands-on" activities. Children learn through first-hand experience with objects, people, and events. Children's learning could be directly applied to life experiences in other environments.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Reflects the attitude that program participants are active learners in a natural child-centered setting
- Is responsive to children's self-chosen interests and needs, and applies to children's lives outside of the program's setting

PHYSICAL

- Adaptations/modifications are made to the environment to allow *all* children participation in all activities
- Children's interests should drive the design of the physical environment
- Facilitates children's interaction with objects, people, and situations reflective of their natural world

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Relate to common interests of young children (animals, pretend play, exploration) as well as specific interests of individual children
- Materials used reflect what would be found in the child's natural environment if it was responsive, developmentally appropriate, and child-centered
- Materials are manipulable, concrete, and promote children's physical interaction with them
- First-hand experiences with objects, people, and events are stressed
- Promote the discovery of concepts, rather than, the accumulation of facts
- Use children's past experiences (e.g., cultural background) as a knowledge base for future experiences
- Motivate and extend incidental learning experience
- Are applicable to the daily life experiences of young children
- Common, child's-world materials are used frequently in a variety of ways to promote children's comfort in using them
- Real world, not toy-sized, objects should be available for children

C. ADULTS

- Represent the natural diversity (culture, gender, age, ability) of the real world of the child (i.e., paid staff/volunteers could be adults with disabilities)

- Capitalize on opportunities for incidental learning by seizing teachable moments
- Provide children with opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences with people, objects, and events
- Consider children's interests when planning and implementing activities
- Motivate children to actively discover concepts rather than passively receive information

D. CHILDREN

- Are involved in activities that are intrinsically interesting to them and relate to their real world
- Interact with people and objects to discover conclusions about their world
- Apply what they have discovered in the program to daily events occurring outside of the program
- Are involved in real world activities outside of their classroom (e.g., grocery shopping, library, gardening)

Example

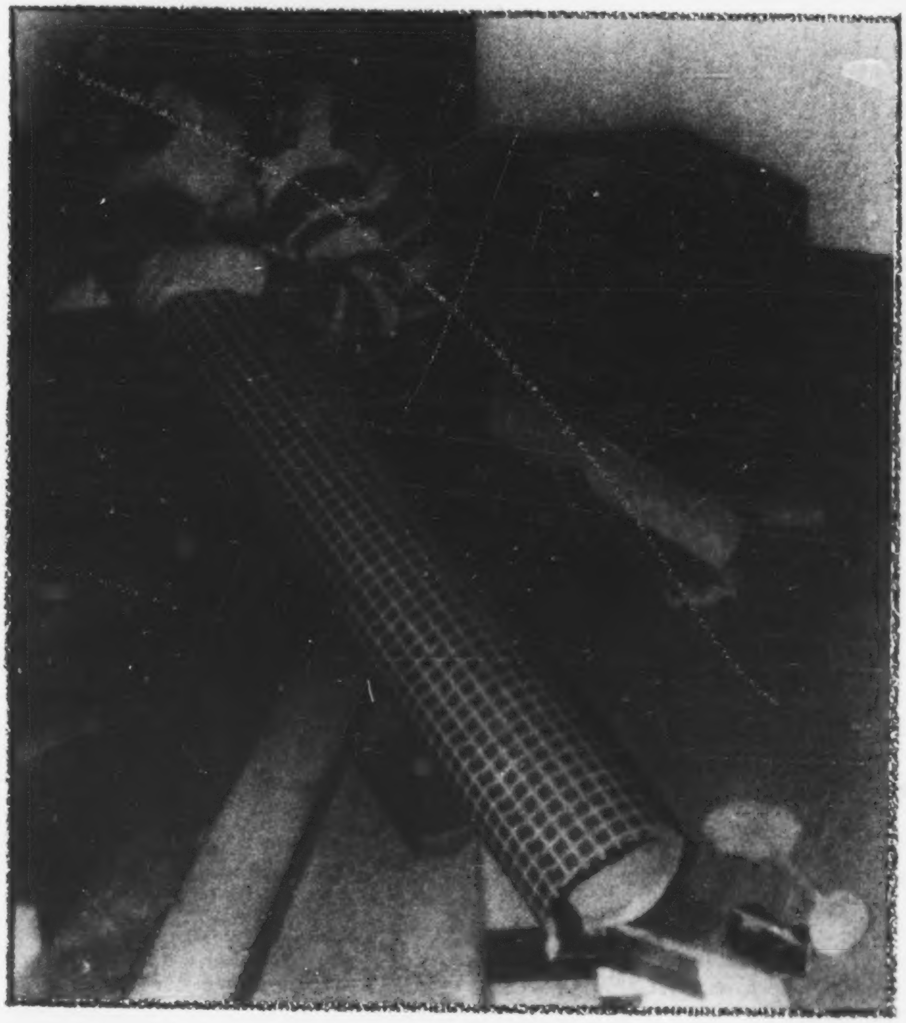
Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida,
Miami Child Development Center, Dayton, Ohio and
Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Children seem to learn and remember best when the activities they are engaged in relate to experiences they have or materials with which they are familiar. Interest in an activity will lead them to explore an object, material, event, etc. to discover more about it. What could be more familiar to children than animals, plants, and themselves. We saw three programs use these as the focus for activities that related to the "real world" of children.

At the Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, Florida, the shouts of children during outdoor play is countered by bleats, quacks, clucks and other noises from a live animal area at the farthest end of the outdoor playground. However, this is not an observational zoo-type area. Children are responsible for the daily feeding and care of the animals, hauling feed by a wagon each day to the farm area, and get to see first-hand the birth, growth, and death of various common animals. Their questions about animals can be answered by strolling to the fenced-in area where animals live and grow. Incidents such as a parade of ducklings waddling after their mother or the change in an animal's fur thickness as colder weather sets in become "teachable moments" to inspire and continue the sense of wonder each child has.

We also saw growing plants capture the interest of young children at the Miami Child Development Center in Dayton, Ohio. Children had planted an "indoor garden" by putting seeds in layers of plastic wrap. As the seeds began to sprout children were able to get closer looks at their plants by using magnifying glasses. They had group times for observing their plants supplemented by fiction and non-fiction stories related to plant growth, but they could also observe their plants individually during free play. We saw that happen, often beginning a discussion among children about different aspects of plants and their growth. There were plant displays around the room and children got to transplant their sprouts and eventually take them home, no doubt much better able to care for their plants because of their preschool activities.

At the Vermont College Preschool we observed children become enthralled with their own hands. An overhead projector had been set up so that a story using colored cellophane cutout characters and settings could be used. These story elements were projected on a light-colored wall. After the story, children started to experiment with the overhead projector by projecting enormous shadows of their hands on the wall. Soon a group of children were at both the projector and the wall observing a variety of characteristics about their own and other's hands, such as size, shape, and movement. This activity completely initiated by children, but then encouraged by adults, continued for a long time motivated by the questions, discoveries, and "messing around" of three, four and five year olds. All that was needed for this cognitive activity about shadows was an overhead projector, a large wall, and some inquisitive children.



▶ GOAL

18.4 The thinking process, rather than a completed product, is emphasized.

Best Practice

The thinking process is clearly stressed rather than completed products. Diversity of thought is motivated and reinforced.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Encourages children to follow their independent ideas about topics
- Is free of evaluation related to specific types of products
- Encourages unique and diverse answers/solutions to questions/problems on a daily basis
- Causes children to be curious and questioning

PHYSICAL

- Stresses distinctive products
- Contains items that motivate children to ask questions or search for answers
- Room displays portray diverse examples related to one topic or idea so that children sense that the generation of many answers/ideas is positive
- *All* children have access to all materials and space within the room

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Extend the thinking of children beyond specific facts or closed-ended products
- Should be free of pre-made examples or models that inhibit the child's motivation to create products different than the displayed model
- A wide variety of materials/media is available for activities so that children's products can display a personal/distinctive flair
- Should be adapted for the use of all participating children so that every child has the chance to demonstrate their unique ideas
- Multi-purpose open-ended materials are used so that children aren't "locked-in" to a specific use for materials (clay, paint, blocks, wood, natural materials, etc.)
- The complexity of materials encourages thinking about materials, as well as acting upon them
- Materials should be plentiful and diverse to allow children many choices for extending an activity or elaborating a product

C. ADULTS

- Become involved in activities so that children's thinking may be extended beyond what they already know about the materials being used (questioning, suggesting alternatives, drawing analogous situations, etc.)
- Encourage children's self-directed problem-solving and experimentation
- Use children's interest, natural curiosity, and desire to make sense of the world as a basis for extending their thought
- Model the continuous thinking about a topic/idea beyond one solution or answer

- Respect unique/distinctive thoughts, products, actions, and answers
- Allow children more than adequate time for them to add to or rework products in progress

D. CHILDREN

- Express their ideas through a variety of modes (thoughts, arts/crafts, dramatic play, etc.)
- Suggest a multitude of ways for doing things, solving problems, changing situations, etc.
- Spend independent time on activities they have chosen
- Think about what they are doing during activities
- Demonstrate that they continue to think about program activities/experiences they have had while outside of the preschool environment (bring in items from home related to preschool activities)

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

For some reason, teachers and parents alike tend to enjoy seeing or need to see children's products. Often these products are used to prove something about an accomplishment of the child or to see how close a child replicates a pre-made model. Emphasis is placed on the finished product, not the process the child used. Many times the child's product falls short of the premade model causing frustration, and loss of esteem. For the development of cognition, process far exceeds product in importance. The stress on process over product was very evident at the Arlitt Child Development Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Two specific activities we observed were good examples of motivating children to engage in a process without the pressure of completing some preordained product.

One activity was a center devoted to helping children learn about pendulums. A wooden-framed pendulum was the focal point of the center that included pictures illustrating functional uses of pendulums and many supplement materials like different sized pegs, measuring devices, and various pendulum weights. The center was in an open area of the room. Children weren't directed to play there, but if a child did become involved with the pendulums a teacher would stop by to extend play by asking questions, making comments or supplying more materials.

In another classroom, part of the woodworking area contained various shaped and sized pieces of Styrofoam. This Styrofoam became the base of wonderful "sculpture-like" creations after children attached a variety of materials like buttons, beads, pipe cleaners, string, straws, and spools to it. No premade model was present, so children were allowed and encouraged to invent, create, construct, and modify as they wished. Children didn't struggle trying to replicate someone else's work. They were free to work through their own ideas, at their own pace. What occurred during both of these activities was that children could think about what they were doing, then personally act upon that thought. They didn't have to try to physically or mentally match what already had been done or prescribed by an adult.

▶ GOAL

18.5 Conceptual, rather than rote, learning is stressed.

Best Practice

Children are motivated to gain broad understandings of ideas that can be used for later learning or in applied ways.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Encourages and presents opportunities to apply knowledge previously constructed
- Stresses using, rather than memorizing and repeating, knowledge
- Encourages the generalization of ideas rather than remembering specific facts

PHYSICAL

- Should reflect the diversity of settings where knowledge could be applied (outdoors, stores, different occupational settings, etc.)
- The variety of settings within the classroom promotes the transfer of initial knowledge to new settings
- Is arranged so that *all* children have access to all activities, materials, and learning areas

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Allow the application of already constructed knowledge to new situations
- Emphasize experiential learning relevant to typical early childhood experiences
- Focus on knowledge that can be generalized to many settings/situations rather than to knowledge that can be generalized to isolated instances
- Common natural materials such as, balls, blocks, boxes, water, clay, etc. are used so that the children's familiarity with these materials allows them to apply them in varied situations/settings
- A sufficient amount of materials are available so that many situations or ideas can be addressed by children while applying their knowledge
- Are adaptable to the needs of *all* children so that they can apply their knowledge in appropriate life situations

C. ADULTS

- Encourage the construction of knowledge that can be applied by children to situations outside of the program, rather than the rote memorization of isolated facts
- Promote the application of knowledge they observe children constructing during daily activities to new situations/settings
- Value the application efforts of children even though these efforts may not "work completely"
- Praise the transfer/generalization of knowledge they see demonstrated by children
- Encourage new ways of using traditional early childhood materials

D. CHILDREN

- Apply/generalize knowledge they construct in new setting/ situations
- Relate past experiences to new situations and suggest new solutions to current problems
- Discuss how knowledge constructed during the program day relates to their life experiences
- Are involved in real-life situations, with real-life materials, where knowledge can be applied functionally rather than symbolically

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

A burning question asked down through the ages is, "What came first, the chicken or the egg?" Well, at the Vermont College Preschool the chicken came first. While being introduced to the staff at the Vermont College Preschool our team heard faint cluckings in the corner of one of the classrooms. To our surprise, the clucking sounds were coming from a make-shift coop constructed of wood, chicken wire, and duct tape. The coop was inhabited by several live, *yes live,* chickens.

The week we visited Vermont, the preschool was involved in a farm unit, with a special emphasis on chickens. For several days the children had a chance to observe the behavior of chickens up close and personal. The children sang farm-related songs, read and were read farm stories, made "nests" of torn paper around the room to roost in, and played with toy barns and animals.

As luck, and nature, would have it, the chickens even laid a few eggs toward the end of the week, so that children were able to observe the beginning of a new cycle of life. To conclude the unit, the staff brought in fresh eggs, cracked them open and held them for children to observe, then assisted the children in cooking a batch of them while discussing terms such as "over easy," "sunny side up," and "scrambled." As the children devoured the eggs, the Dr. Seuss book, *Green Eggs and Ham* was read to them.

As you notice, this farm unit was not a quick "book and picture" view of farm life with the main intent being to remember a few traditional facts. It was a closer look into some specific elements of farm life, and life in general, that children will be able to remember and transfer to other ideas (such as bird life) because of their experiences at the preschool that week. They now have a much better concept of chickens, eggs, and farm life than just a week earlier.

4. Social Development

▶ GOAL

19.1 Adult-child interaction promotes the social development of children.

Best Practice

All adults pay attention to and respect children's ideas, motivate child-child interaction in varied settings and group alignments, get on the physical eye-level of children, stress positive aspects of children, and model positive social statements frequently.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Invites the social interaction of all program participants
- Provides opportunities for a variety of modes of interaction

PHYSICAL

- Arrangement and design invites adult-child interaction

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Motivate adult-child interaction
- Promote adult-child mutual learning
- Sample materials/activities would include: puppets, unbiased children's literature, dramatic play, flannel board, adult-child cooperative activities (cooking), selected A-V materials (video/tape recorder/player, overhead projector)

C. ADULTS

- Demonstrate an interactive instructional style
- Are attentive to and respectful of children's ideas
- Motivate adult-child interaction whenever and wherever possible
- Get on physical eye-level of children
- Stress positive aspects of children
- Model positive social statements
- Modify the environment so that *all* children can interact (offer alternatives to speech, e.g., signing, symbols, pictures, illustrations)

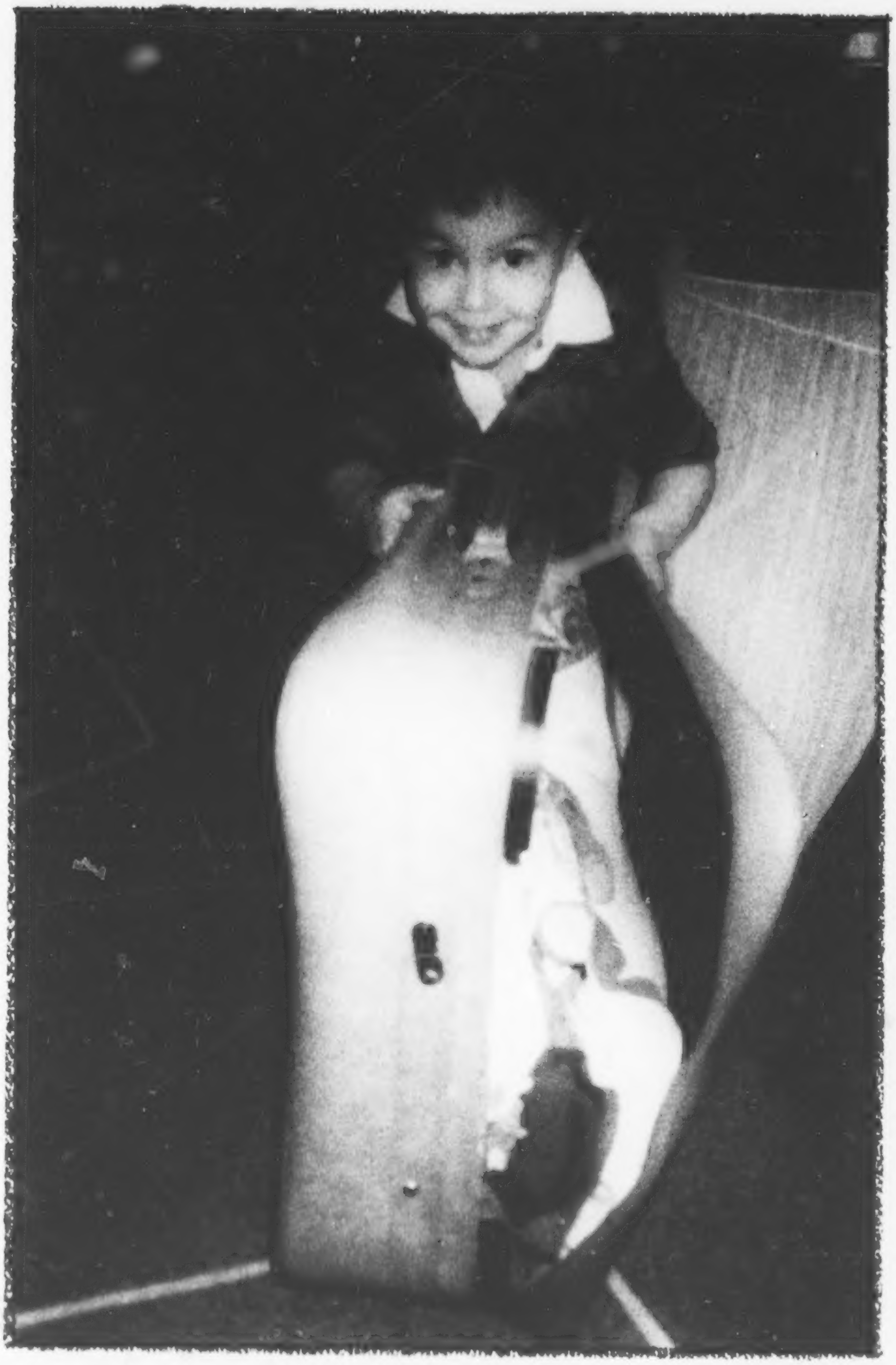
D. CHILDREN

- Model positive social statements
- Interact socially with a variety of adults regardless of age, gender, race, culture, socioeconomic status, and ability
- Begin recognizing the feelings of others through interaction with adults

Example

Westside Public School District #66, Omaha, Nebraska

A surprise spring snow shower had carpeted the playground of the preschool we were visiting in Omaha, Nebraska. Inside, however, the warmth of Hawaii pervaded as children donned sunglasses and visors, unraveled beach mats and towels, and even got into swimwear. One teacher even put on a swimsuit (over her clothes) at the request of several children. She then proceeded to sunbathe with several children, turning over frequently for an even tan. During this time she interacted fully with the children like an old friend on the beach, asking them questions to promote conversation with her and among themselves. It takes a very special adult to respect the play idea of children to the point that this teacher did. She put herself totally in the position of the children to enrich the social atmosphere for them.



▶ GOAL

19.2 Child-child interaction promotes the social development of children.

Best Practice

Child-child interaction is rewarded by all adults. There are many and varied opportunities for child-child interaction daily. Children are helped by adults to resolve their own social conflicts. Adults help facilitate both the entry of less social children into social situations and the positive interaction between children with disabling conditions and their typically developing peers.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Invites the social interaction of all children
- Is a non-competitive/cooperative
- Values the diversity of all program participants (gender, age, cultured, ability, socio-economic, race)
- Encourages joint cooperative exploration

PHYSICAL
- Arrangement and design invites child-child interaction/cooperation (padded alcove, padded bathtub, loft, group soft furnishings)

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS
- Motivate child-child interaction
- Promote child-child mutual/cooperative learning
- Necessitate negotiation about and cooperation toward a common goal
- Attributes of activities/materials (size, weight, complexity) necessitate the involvement of more than one child
- Activities help children to understand themselves and their needs in order to begin understanding others
- Sample materials/activities include: clean-up time, cooking/baking, dramatic play, wheeled toys that allow group involvement, building materials/loose parts, oversized materials (large playground balls), double slides, cooperative tire swings

C. ADULTS
- Create situations that motivate child-child interaction
- Model cooperative endeavors and inclusion of/interaction with less socially skilled children as well as children with disabilities
- Coach children who need help with social entry strategies
- Help children resolve their own social conflicts and realize how others feel about conflict situations
- Reward the cooperative efforts of children by verbal praise, hugs, pats, smiles, written notes

D. CHILDREN

- Interact in a variety of group alignments and settings
- Negotiate in pairs/groups to problem solve, resolve conflicts, and work toward common goals
- Interact with peers both alike and unlike (gender, age, ability, race, culture, social class) themselves
- Discover the benefit of cooperative social relationships

Example

Toledo Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Toledo, Ohio

We are busy watching a physical therapist (PT) in Toledo working with Jasper, a young child with orthopedic disabilities. Often such therapy would be done in isolation, away from the natural classroom environment and the natural play interests of the child, only focusing on the child's deficit needs, rather than development needs. However, this therapy is being done in the classroom with typically developing peers joining in. Jasper's first activity has been tossing plastic eggs into metal containers with a distinct "plink" while balancing on a teeterboard. We were pleased by the PT's sensitivity to whole child development, not just physical development, for she made sure other developmental domains were addressed during the course of her time with Jasper, especially social development. The PT spent close to an hour with Jasper, making sure that he used many forms of locomotion (crawling on hands and knees, walking with her assistance, using his walker) and that he practiced many movements and positions useful for daily preschool functioning (pulling oneself up to the water table, hanging up a painting to dry, finding a comfortable sitting position on the floor for circle time). She made sure that each activity was a social event, not merely a physical one. Each activity that Jasper chose to do (water table, painting, blocks) involved other children. The PT facilitated social interaction during these activities by asking questions of all the participating children, as well as inviting children to join Jasper during play and celebrating his accomplishments. As Jasper concluded his time with the PT she asked Kevin, one of Jasper's friends, if he would like to walk with his friend to the circle area. Kevin wanted to and walked slowly along side of Jasper, who was using a walker, to the far end of the classroom. As Jasper completed his trek, the PT praised him for his effort and "gave him five." Kevin followed suit with a five of his own to Jasper and then gave Jasper a big hug, which prompted the PT to say, "Jasper is a good buddy isn't he?" What a great example of integrating social development with physical therapy! We credit this PT with being able to blend developmentally appropriate practice and exceptionality appropriate practice so naturally that Jasper didn't know therapy was happening. He was just going about his business with his friends.

▶ GOAL

19.3 Cooperation, not competition, is stressed.

Best Practice

Cooperation is motivated frequently by adult verbal statements and by activities that need more than one child to accomplish.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Nurtures cooperation, not competition
- A sense of community is fostered that celebrates the cooperative contribution of *all* program participants regardless of individual differences such as gender, age, ability, race, culture, social class

PHYSICAL
- Contains physical spaces that motivate group interaction or situations

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Require group planning, effort, and cooperation
- Promote social play as a vehicle for children's cooperative efforts
- Necessitate the cooperative efforts of more than one person in order to accomplish a common goal
- Reflect attributes (size, weight, complexity) that necessitate the involvement of more than one person
- Include clean-up time, cooking/baking, dramatic play, wheeled toys that allow group involvement, sensory tables, work benches, building materials, loose parts

C. ADULTS

- Participate in the arrangement and rearrangement of the physical environment to promote social interaction and cooperation
- Model cooperative behaviors with colleagues and children
- Coach children regarding cooperative planning and negotiating
- Reward cooperative efforts of program participants with verbal praise, hugs, pats, smiles, written notes

D. CHILDREN

- Participate in arrangement and rearrangement of the physical environment
- Negotiate in pairs/groups to problem solve, resolve conflicts, and work toward common goals
- Discover the benefit of cooperative social relationships

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Since competition and individualization are stressed so much in our society, it is no wonder that these principles are observed in many preschools. At the Vermont College Preschool, however, we noticed a concerted effort by the educators to promote a cooperative spirit among the children throughout the day.

A special activity one of the days we were there was "feet painting." Children painted each other's feet with brushes, and later by pressing their painted feet against each other's feet. Teachers got into the act as well. The painted feet were used to make a "tracks" mural that was compared with track prints of various animals. This activity could have been accomplished individually, but really promoted cooperation in the classroom we observed. A more typical, everyday occurrence was the placement of an old-fashioned food grinder in the home-living area. Such a household item almost forces at least two children working together to operate it. One child to hold the base of the grinder while another child grinds, or one child to feed material into the grinder while the other child grinds it. So again we have cooperation motivated by the placement of a simple item in one of the children's play areas.

Clean-up time is also used to promote cooperation at the Vermont College Preschool. Since they have limited space in their center, large muscle equipment must be moved in and out of classrooms each day, along with putting regular material away after play periods. The adults could probably save time by moving the equipment themselves, but this task becomes a joint adult-child activity with much conversation, light-hearted banter, singing with Hap Palmer and Raffe and positive reinforcement heard as the equipment is moved.

A final example involves how much cooperation can take place in integrated preschools where "so-called" children with disabilities help typically developing children's lives to be better. One area of a classroom in Vermont was equipped with a personal computer. A typically developing child was having problems making the program run and asked a teacher for help. The teacher could have responded quickly and helped this child with his problem, however, she saw a chance to motivate some cooperative interaction between the computer-overwhelmed child and Ian, a child with cerebral palsy who was a computer whiz. What followed was an animated discussion between two children with the child with "disabilities" "teaching" his typically developing friend the fine points of computer literacy.

5. Emotional Development

▶ GOAL

20.1 Each child is given accurate, but positive, feedback.

Best Practice

All children are given frequent, accurate feedback on their accomplishments and behavior by adults, however when this feedback relates to inappropriate actions it does not diminish the overall worthiness of children in the eyes of themselves, their peers, and program adults. Children's positive characteristics are stressed.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL
- Posted statements and directions accentuate positive behavior
- Is responsive to children's needs
- Is a supportive, emotional environment

PHYSICAL
- Is colorful and cheerful
- Motivates exploration of self, others, and the environment
- Challenges children to demonstrate their abilities and talents
- Is responsive to children's actions upon it

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Provide frequent, accurate feedback (full length mirror, photos, drawings of child/family, tape recorded voices, puzzles, legos)
- Relate to the individual differences represented by all program participants (culture, gender, ethnicity, social class, disabling condition) in order to develop accurate self-concepts in all children
- Are multi-purposeful, open-ended, divergent, and success-oriented
- Are labeled and color-coded to allow children to develop self-responsibility/independence which enhances self-concept/self-esteem
- Are scheduled in a predictable way thus providing a consistent daily framework for children's activities
- Are primarily process-oriented rather than product-oriented, so emphasis is placed on effort not results
- Reflect the careful selection of unbiased and non-romanticized children's literature which accurately portrays human differences related to culture, gender, ethnicity, ability, social class, age
- Are adapted to insure full participation of all program participants

C. ADULTS

- Give children frequent, accurate feedback
- Give feedback related to inappropriate actions that does not diminish the overall worthiness of the person in the eyes of themselves, their peers, and program adults
- Stress positive characteristics of program participants
- Reinforce attempted and actual successes of program participants
- Celebrate the worthiness of individuals regardless of their differences related to culture, gender, ethnicity, ability, social class, age
- Select appropriate activities/materials and provide sufficient time with children's emotional development in mind

D. CHILDREN

- Self-select activities that give them ideas about themselves and others
- Discover a variety of human differences
- Develop an accurate self-concept
- Are interactive with physical environment and program participants
- Develop an awareness of self with the program group and global community

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

During outdoor large muscle time we noticed a young girl trying to reach the bottom rung on a stationary ladder affixed to an external wall. A university student who was an instructional assistant noticed the child's interest and helped her physically to grab the rung, as well as verbally with suggestions and positive reinforcement. The university student questioned the child "about what she would do next" and encouraged her to try different positions on the ladder like arching her body to see the sun. The child finally lowered herself from the ladder rung by rung and dropped to the ground. At that moment another child ran over and wanted her turn on the apparatus, however, the original climber didn't want to relinquish "her" ladder. An argument ensued. The university student, realizing the benefits of children resolving their own conflicts, encouraged them to "talk together and work it out." They began doing this with encouragement and clarification from the adult. Several other youngsters approached the interaction and before long the scene had turned into a positive social event with the original climber taking a leadership or "expert" role. So a situation that began negatively as an argument, ended positively for a child because an observant adult thought that building self-concept/self-esteem was more important than ending an argument quickly.

▶ GOAL

20.2 Adults demonstrate that they value each child.

Best Practice

Adults frequently interact on an individual basis with children, pointing out positive characteristics/worthiness of the child. Children can be heard modeling such remarks themselves. Adults give physical attention to many children.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is a supportive emotional environment
- Is responsive to children's needs
- Promotes interaction among all program participants
- Is busy, conversant, happy, and interactive

PHYSICAL

- Is responsive to children's actions
- Challenges children to demonstrate their abilities and talents
- Promotes interaction among all program participants
- Considers the special needs of all program participants

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Children's ideas, products, efforts, constructions, etc. are recognized, valued, and respected
- Activities are provided to meet different levels of ability, interest, and learning styles/preferences
- Activities are planned that involve adult-child interaction
- Promote participation of all children
- Highlight the "expertise" of each child
- Are modified/adapted to ensure the participation of all program participants
- Children's ideas are valued and, therefore, used in curricular and activity planning
- Sample activities/materials might include: sharing, displays, labeling of children's work, exhibits

C. ADULTS

- Frequently interact with individual children
- Point out positive characteristics/worthiness of each child
- Give positive verbal and physical attention to all children
- Use classroom management techniques that are non-threatening, not humiliating, and always respect the dignity of the child
- Listen and respond to each child's ideas, concerns, fears, questions, etc.
- Are sensitive to individual children's cues and emotional, cultural, linguistic, and developmental needs

D. CHILDREN

- Model statements that point out positive characteristics/worthiness of others
- Feel secure enough to express themselves in a variety of ways and are responsive to program participants, environment, and activities/materials
- Are relaxed, happy, busy, and conversant
- Demonstrate a trusting attitude toward the program participants and environment

Example

Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

We've followed this particular program adult around most of the morning. She's amazing! She knows every child in the program by name. We watch her hug, kiss, and ask questions of children frequently. She stoops down to get on the eye level of two children who have had a disagreement to help them solve their differences. She stops by a sand table to discuss children's discoveries with them. She sits in the center of a group of children, helping them plan their individual agendas. We see her pick up a child with a runny nose and give him a big smooch. She modeled the role of friend to adults and children through actions and words. Who's this woman? She was none other than the director of the program. A woman who demonstrates her value of all personkind, but especially children each day. And what do you think we heard a child say about his non-verbal peer when asked, "who is he?" as we got ready to leave the center at the end of the day. "Oh him, he's A.J., my friend." To us, this was a perfect example of how adult modeling of valuing all people trickles down to young children over time. "Administrative" integration doesn't make this occur, being involved daily in an environment where people value each other highly does.

▶ GOAL

20.3 Activities/materials are selected so that the success of individual children is ensured.

Best Practice

All children are successful in their endeavors regardless of ability, exceptionality or interest. Failure and frustration are not evident.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is responsive to children's needs
- Is a positive, child-centered, unbiased atmosphere leading to success

PHYSICAL

- Is responsive to children's actions upon it
- Challenges children to demonstrate their abilities and talents
- Considers the special needs of all program participants
- Placement of materials promotes easy-access, independence, and self-responsibility of each child

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- The activities are developmentally sequenced and interest-oriented
- Amount, variety, and level of materials ensures participation of all children
- The spontaneous activity of children is ensured during the course of a teacher-organized daily plan
- Are open-ended, divergent, multi-purposeful, self-evaluating
- Relevant activities/materials (culture and ethnic) that are not stereotypical are selected to make experiences more meaningful for the child
- Materials reflect the cultural, ethnic, geographic, and economic/vocational elements of the region served
- Are extended/enriched with the inclusion of area or culture specific materials of the region (buckeyes, rancher clothing, coal mining, animals)
- Sample activities/materials might include: puzzles, unbiased quality children's literature, blocks, water/sand play, art materials

C. ADULTS

- Create activities/materials that are relevant (culturally, ethnically, geographically, ability) to *all* children
- Develop centers and areas that do not allow the failure of children
- Provide adapted/modified materials so that *all* children can be successful regardless of their abilities and conditions
- Intervene and/or redirect, when observing children not meeting success
- Resist urge to over-help children who may have selected challenging materials

D. CHILDREN

- Demonstrate the joy of accomplishment and industry
- Demonstrate the willingness to take risks and face challenges
- Have daily successful experiences
- Use prior successes as motivation/base for new activities
- Self-select activities and materials they find interesting, then extend/enrich them through the addition of materials that make the activities they have selected more complex
- Make meaning or learn concepts/skills from materials/activities

Example

Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

We've been watching many children playing outdoors here in Florida for quite awhile and things that are usually evident when young children get together don't seem to be happening. Where's the arguing, crying, tattling, failure and frustration? We believe this type of behavior wasn't observed outside at this center because the environment has been planned with success of all children in mind. We saw children enjoying success while making the world's largest pizza out of sand, twigs, and leaves, while feeding farm animals, while making wooden furniture, while riding wheeled toys, while "writing" messages on outdoor blackboard, and while playing in sand, soapsuds, and oobleck on a veranda. Why was there so much success going on? We think success was ensured because there was a large amount of space, a large quantity of open-ended materials and loose parts, a variety of ability levels for materials, plenty of adults available to encourage and assist children in their endeavors, and the freedom for children to choose what they wanted to do and be given enough time to do it.

Some may think success would be more difficult for children with disabling conditions in a free-wheeling outdoor environment. However, we noticed that therapy goals were being met successfully since children could select from a variety of activities made accessible through adapted equipment or the facilitation of a therapist without removal from this highly motivating atmosphere. Tara was one such child. She was visually impaired, but we observed her writing on the outdoor chalkboard, pulling and riding in a wagon, playing with oobleck, carrying moveable construction parts, and going down a slide with a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment. Her vision specialist made a point of telling us later in an interview that, as a therapist, she had tried both the pull-out method and integrated method of vision therapy with Tara. Tara's positive responses and visual development during the integrated therapy convinced this therapist that integrating her therapy into the natural play environment of the child was much more successful.

▶ GOAL

20.4 Activities, materials and environment allow acceptable emotional release.

Best Practice

Materials, space and daily schedule allow children to express emotions in an acceptable way each day.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is active, as well as calm, relaxed and happy

PHYSICAL

- Contains soothing elements (beanbag chairs, rocking chair, stuff animals, quiet/peaceful area, music, aquarium)
- Allows individual movement and other forms of emotional release without a restricted feeling
- Placement of learning areas are planned so that noisy activities do not interfere with quiet activities

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Are planned so that children can release emotions throughout the day in various ways, such as movement, large muscle, fine motor, sensory play, music and rhythm, medium exploration
- The daily planned schedule includes a balance of quiet and active/noisy activities
- Make use of one's own body to express oneself such as pantomime, creative movement, dramatic play, music rhythm
- Sample activities/materials might include: painting/printing etc. with a variety of unique mediums and materials (potato masher, fruits and vegetables, feathers), fluid materials (water, sand, oobleck, whipped soap flakes, jello), clay, playdoh, parachute, workbench, wheel toys, climbing apparatus

C. ADULTS

- Plan a daily schedule that balances quiet and active/noisy activities
- Create peaceful spaces for children who need to retreat for a time of respite
- Redirect the behavior of children who are exhibiting unacceptable emotional release
- Model acceptable emotional release and appropriate strategies for dealing with their emotions
- Affirm what children are feeling by restatement, ("I know that you're feeling angry about what Billy did")
- Praise appropriate emotional behavior

D. CHILDREN

- Demonstrate acceptable emotional release
- Are involved in a variety of activities and with a variety of materials that allow acceptable emotional release
- Verbalize emotions rather than physically "acting out"

Example

Miami Valley Child Development Center, Dayton, Ohio and Akron Integrated Preschool, Akron, Ohio

Children need space, time, and materials that allow them to release the vast amounts of energy they have in appropriate ways. If children don't have such a release, frustration, anxiety, and boredom can cause inappropriate behavior. Programs need to provide a balance of activities between active/noisy and quiet/soothing in order for children to release their emotions in an acceptable manner. Activities from two centers in Ohio demonstrate this balance.

We watched a group of youngsters in Dayton guide the movement of a large blue and white parachute, making it move up and down and helping it catch the air so that it would billow up toward the ceiling. They moved it fast and slow to changing music and the teachers put playground balls on top of it for added enjoyment. The children squealed with delight as they watched the balls undulate on top of the silk. As this activity concluded, the children, their energy spent, quickly moved to nearby tables to enjoy their snack.

In Akron we observed a fixed space designed as a children's retreat for when they needed solitude or rest. A large teepee was set up in the corner of one room. It was filled with soft cushions, pillows, stuffed animals and books so that children could go there and relax for a time if the world seemed to be too busy for them. Each center needs such a balance of activities and spaces to ensure children have the chance to release their emotions daily.

▶ GOAL

21. Activities, materials, and environment encourage the development of independence and self-responsibility.

Best Practice

The physical environment is conducive to all children developing independence and self-responsibility. Adults promote and reinforce independence and self-responsibility. A variety of materials and activities motivate children to develop self-help skills. Children generalize skills developed during center activities to appropriate natural situations.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is conducive to *all* children developing independence and self-responsibility

PHYSICAL

- Physical arrangement of the environment, although predictable for children, is flexible in that materials are added and changed on a frequent basis
- Materials are easily accessible for *all* children (ramps, clear pathways, open/visible containers, labeled shelves and materials, written braille, picture labeling, displayed rather than boxed materials, purposeful arrangement of materials, object outlining of materials within children's physical reach, general uncluttered area)
- Sample environmental adaptations might include: rimmed tables/dishes/trays, food guards, modified spoons, assist rails, adapted toilets, sound-activated devices

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Motivate children to develop self-help skills by promoting independent use, encouraging self-evaluation, encouraging participation in management/clean-up of environment, allowing tasks that normally could not be done by one child, or a cooperative group of children, to be done (rollers on easel), storage organization that is comprehensible to/usable by children
- Provide for a range of developmental, interest, and cultural levels
- Should be transferable to the children's world (i.e., dressing dolls and themselves, snack time tasks, lacing and tying, washing dolls, toothbrushing, mobility techniques, etc.)

C. ADULTS

- Design an environment reflecting the characteristics mentioned in the environment section
- Select activities/materials reflecting the characteristics mentioned in the activities/materials section
- Adapt and modify activities/materials so that *all* children will feel successful and self-responsible
- Encourage the use of the above-mentioned materials
- Help children help themselves, rather than doing things for children
- Praise children's efforts related to independence/self-responsibility
- Evaluate the success of the activities/materials used for self-help

D. CHILDREN

- Attempt self-help routines such as dressing, eating, washing, mobility, toileting and the self-selection, retrieval, and return of materials
- Generalize skills from center activities to natural situations such as feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene, and mobility
- Encourage others to attempt independent tasks
- Share problem solving strategies with peers about situations calling for self-help

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio,
Westside Public School District #66, Omaha, Nebraska,
Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont and
Miami Valley Child Development Center, Dayton, Ohio

An age old problem for all adults who deal with young children is trying to help them become more self-responsible and independent. Too often, however, such attempts end in frustration for adults upon discovering children's belongings and playthings strewn all over the place. Who wants to see a child's jockey shorts on the banister or a bicycle in the middle of the driveway? We've all seen preschool rooms with toys thrown in a pile and materials just dumped in boxes. Some basic strategies implemented at the early childhood programs we've observed go a long way to begin developing self-responsibility in young children.

At the Arlitt Child Development Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Westside Community Public Schools Preschool in Omaha, Nebraska, shelves are used for storage, rather than boxes. The places for objects on those shelves are color and size coded. The Omaha center also labeled transparent plastic boxes to store objects such as string, pasta, beads, etc. for arts and crafts activities. Individual cubbies and coat hooks are labeled for children with their name and picture. All these strategies make it easier for children to find materials and return materials to their appropriate places, in turn helping children do things by and for themselves. In addition to strategies for organizing materials, is responsibility given to children for snack time. Children can and should help with the setting of the table, passing out food, and pouring drinks. Children can be helped to do this using easy-to-serve food and smaller, partially filled drink containers. If messes occur, help children to clean them up. At the Vermont College Preschool in

Montpelier, Vermont, and the Miami Valley Child Development Center in Dayton, Ohio, we've seen children even involved in the preparation and clean-up of snack, working along side the cook and then scraping what's remaining on their plates into garbage containers at the end of snack time.

Educators need to look for activities that incorporate skills and ideas that are easily transferable to life situations for children. Helping children realize how competent they are or can be makes life much easier for them and the adults around them.

▶ GOAL

22.1 Children are motivated to communicate and do communicate with peers and adults in a variety of ways.

Best Practice

Adults motivate much child-child and child-adult communication in a variety of modes, including adaptive communication devices as needed. Adults make a concerted effort to have children diversify their communication.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is language-rich, promoting adult-child and child-child expressive and receptive communication
  Examples of expressive language are: oral, sign, communication devices, creative dramatics and movement experiences, pictures, puppetry
  Examples of receptive language are: auditory, visual, tactile (Braille, sandpaper tracings), communication devices
- Stimulates curiosity leading to communication

PHYSICAL

- Environmental adaptations are made which ensure adult-child, child-child communication and which are specific to individual program participant's needs (i.e., acoustical tiles, acoustical wall coverings, sound absorbant floor coverings, sound systems, magnification devices, contrasting paint)

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Motivate exploration, curiosity, and inquiry fostering adult-child and child-child communication
- Are adapted/modified so that *all* children are motivated to communicate (large print, braille and/or multi-lingual books, magnifiers, visual cues, tape recorded stories, messages)
- Adaptive communication devices and/or alternative communicative methods are provided for individual needs (argumentative communication, communication boards, interpreters, signers, voice amplification systems)
- Motivate program participants to communicate in a variety of ways (talking, writing, illustrations, song, creative drama and movement, message board)
- Sample activities might include: language experience stories, big books, nonfiction books, predictable books, classroom pets, resource people, puppets, creative dramatics, cooking activities, field trips, story dictation, written messages

C. ADULTS

- Listen to, repeat, and respond to children's, and other adult's, ideas
- Model the use of diversified communication (talking, writing, illustrations, messages)

- Encourage and praise children's attempts and use of diversified communication
- Plan, provide, adapt, modify activities/materials which foster diversified communication

D. CHILDREN

- Communicate with adults and peers in a variety of ways
- Create new ways of communicating their ideas

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich, Montpelier, Vermont,
Toledo Public Schools Preschool, Toledo, Ohio,
Merricats Castle Preschool, New York City, New York and
Hopewell SERRC, Integrated Early Childhood Program, Hopewell, Ohio

Communication is a basis for human relations; the key to being understood and understanding others. Both expressive (oral and written) and receptive (listening and reading) language are needed for communication, but often oral language is stressed almost to the exclusion of the other language modes in preschools. Each mode of both expressive and receptive language needs to be woven in order for children to develop their language potential and to communicate in the fullest sense with their world.

The exemplary programs we've visited have been able to blend developmentally appropriate practice and exceptionality appropriate practice regarding language development in that all children can realize their language potential. Whenever a birthday occurs at the Early Childhood Programs at Vermont College of Norwich University Preschool, the honored child or adult not only hears "Happy Birthday" being sung, but also can see it being signed by all the program participants. During a glue painting activity at the Toledo Public Schools Preschool, we observed a teacher modeling four ways of communicating about children's paintings. In one corner of the child's painting, she drew a stick figure illustration to represent what the child had been doing after discussing the painting with the child. She also wrote a short description of what the child had done, read that description to him, and signed while she spoke or read. This child and others around him saw four ways of communicating about his work. Such activity gives children a basis for the reading-writing connection.

Children with receptive and/or expressive language disabilities will need assistance so that they can communicate with others. In several exemplary programs the use of adaptive equipment utilizing modern technology has been implemented. Mia, a young hearing-impaired child at the Merricats Castle Preschool in New York City, uses a hearing pack (a battery operated, wireless microphone and receiving apparatus) to communicate with others. Mia was able to hear her teacher anytime he wore the microphone for more directed activities, but would also, with the teacher's encouragement, pass the microphone to peers of her choice as she interacted with them during free play. Kelly, a mild cerebral palsy non-verbal child, used a "touch talker" to communicate with others. The "touch talker" generates speech after icons are pressed. This piece of technology created quite a stir when Kelly first brought it into the classroom. She was able to ask questions, respond in phrases, read programmed stories, and even tell jokes. Soon every child wanted a "touch talker" of their own. Kelly's "touch talker" became an extension of herself, placed in a plastic, child-sized shopping cart, so that it could go wherever Kelly directed it to go.

▶ GOAL

22.2 Children are involved in all aspects of the language arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking) appropriate for their individual emergent abilities.

Best Practice

Activities or learning areas are planned so that children can or will be involved in all the language arts daily, including use of adaptive communication devices as needed. The integration of the language arts is observable.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is language rich and expressive through many and varied opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and speaking, in that it motivates children to use their individual emergent literacy abilities

PHYSICAL

- Is rich with environmental print including original writings, messages of program participants, signs, labels, etc.

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Integrate the language arts and are interwoven throughout the daily experiences
- Are adapted to encourage *all* children to use their receptive and expressive language abilities (communication boards, touch talkers, voice amplification systems, magnifiers, word processing)
- Children's literature is used frequently to supplement children's real life experiences related to curricular topics, as well as for enjoyment
- Give children a variety of ways to read, write, listen, and speak related to their interests and abilities
- Sample activities might include: language experience stories, taped stories, films/filmstrips, creative drama, picture stories, cooking activities, flannel board activities, etc.

C. ADULTS

- View children as active language learners, coming to the program with a wealth of life experiences that can be communicated to others
- Model the use of all the language arts daily
- Modify and adapt activities to meet the individual literacy needs of all children in the program
- Encourage children to express and receive both oral and written language
- Incorporate reading, writing, listening and speaking in many activities related to other developmental domains throughout the day
- Program adults should include speakers of the primary language of attending children

D. CHILDREN

- Are immersed in a language-rich environment of print, pictures, books, discussion, song, etc.
- All the native languages of children and other program participants are respected, appreciated, and explored with English modeled as an important functional language if it doesn't happen to be the native language
- Are involved in activities that promote the development of their reading, writing, listening and speaking, and demonstrate the relationship between/among the language arts

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

The integration of all of the language arts into the preschool environment is a top priority for children's language development at the Arlitt Child Development Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and speaking are all purposely incorporated into the daily preschool activities, thus immersing children in a language-stimulating environment. During the course of one such language-rich activity we observed a young child involved in all of the expressive and receptive language arts. This child was engaged in a cast-making activity led by a parent volunteer (a nurse) who was sharing her expertise in the preschool that afternoon. "Whoa! It sure *looks* like a broken bone!" exclaimed the young boy, holding an x-ray up to a classroom window. This intrigued young fellow listened intently as the nurse answered his thoughtful questions about the subject. He dialogued enthusiastically, sharing his own experiences with broken bones and casts. After a lively conversation, the nurse supplied the child with the necessary materials and assistance for making his own finger cast. When completed, he proudly carried his cast to the windowsill to dry. "There's Michael's; there's Amy's," he read, recognizing the names written beside the casts belonging to his friends. Wanting to write his own name beside his cast but not yet able to do so independently, he scurried over to the writing center to get his word bank containing the written sample of his own name. Using this word card model, he made scribbles beside his finger cast and "wrote" his name. Later during circle time, the children discussed, shared, and even graphed the results of the cast activity. Such high interest, language-stimulating activities are filled with opportunities for children to use reading, writing, listening, and speaking relative to their individual emergent literacy abilities.

▶ GOAL

22.3 Adults use effective questioning and elaboration strategies to help children extend their spoken language.

Best Practice

Adults are observed frequently engaging children in conversation that is meant to extend the spoken language of the children. Children are observed modeling this language extending behavior with peers.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Presents, encourages, and specifically asks questions or sets up situations that cause children to extend their language development
- Conversation and discussion frequently occurs throughout the day

PHYSICAL

- Environmental adaptations are made to insure adult-child and child-child communication for *all* children (acoustical tiles/coverings, sound systems, magnifiers, contrasting paint, touch talker)

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Are open-ended, motivate discussion/conversation, and promote interaction among all program participants
- Promote more elaborate and on-going responses than one-word, phrase, or sentence
- Hypothetical situations and creative dramatics are used to encourage the use and elaboration of children's natural responses/discussion
- Encourage children to put their ideas, emotions, feelings into words
- Sample activities might include: children supplying endings to stories, children planning and recalling daily events/activities, creative dramatics, group/individual problem solving, science exploration area with leading questions, games involving description of objects/events, phone conversations

C. ADULTS

- Use open-ended, and follow-up questioning strategies
- Have other children try to answer or help solve a child's question
- Restate and attempt to clarify children's statements to extend language
- Request that children elaborate their initial statement or question
- Design situations that promote children's discussion, interaction, or verbalization
- Model elaboration and extension of their language

D. CHILDREN

- Model adult questioning strategies with peers
- Express their feelings, emotions, and ideas using language
- Describe objects, events, and ideas in detail
- Are involved in frequent on-going discussions with adults and children about specific topics

- Answer questions with multiple or elaborate answers
- Role play conversant characters

Example

Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Imagine the discussion generated in the purchasing office of the Vermont College of Norwich University when chicken wire, two-by-fours, straw, and duct tape were requisitioned by a certain department. Generating discussion was exactly what the staff of the college's integrated early childhood program intended. It was their idea that a chicken coop built into the corner of the preschool classroom and inhabited by live "Rhode Island Reds" would motivate curiosity and stimulate the elaboration and extension of children's language. And so it was that a chicken coop was fashioned from the above-mentioned materials and was in place (complete with the feathered cluckers) during our three day visit at this exemplary program.

What we heard was an amazing amount of chicken talk ... by chickens and about chickens. Naturally, children had many questions and comments concerning this cleverly constructed classroom coop. In addition to the purposefully designed environment, teachers created activities and materials related to the chicken theme. For example, during circle time a discussion of eggs ensued. The teacher posed questions such as, "If you were a chicken, how would you be born?" "I got this egg at the store but I don't know where the store got it. Where did the store get the egg?" "If I crack this egg what will be inside?" These questions caused children to predict, infer, and problem solve, thus extending their thought and language. Another example occurred during snack time when children were involved in frying their own eggs. Before cracking their own eggs into the electric skillet, the teacher encouraged children to describe and analyze the egg-cracking process with questions such as "Can anyone tell me - without really doing it - how to crack an egg?" "Can you tell me with your words?" "How do you get the crack in the egg?" "If you hit it on the pan and it makes a crack, then what happens?" Animated snack-time discussions were sprinkled with "egg language" such as sunny-side up, fried, poached, over-easy, hard-boiled, and scrambled. In this way, teachers designed the environment, created activities and materials, and used effective questioning and elaboration strategies to help children extend their spoken language.

▶ GOAL

22.4 Adults demonstrate that the written word is a symbolic form of the spoken word.

Best Practice

Adults demonstrate the relationship between the written and spoken word daily.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is print-rich with children encouraged to write or have others write their ideas
- Presents or invites situations that have children symbolize their spoken language

PHYSICAL

- Is print-rich with many functional signs and labeling of natural objects
- Children's attempts at writing are prominently displayed
- Symbolic/written communication is an important component of the environment (e.g., labels, pictures symbolic of how many children can be at a center, sequential illustrated directions)
- Adaptations are made to ensure that children can produce or understand symbolic forms of the spoken word (e.g., word processing, augmentative communication devices)
- Labeling and identification is done in various ways (photographs, illustrations, words) and for functional reasons (cubbies, personal belongings, learning areas, etc.) so that children perceive the usefulness of the written word-spoken word relationship

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Many activities involve adults or children writing or illustrating information
- Many materials and "instruments" are available for children to "write" with
- Are adapted/modified so that *all* children can demonstrate/understand the relationships between the written and spoken word (e.g., word processing, computer projection, touch talker, communication board)
- Sample activities/materials might include: story dictation and illustration by hand or on computer, Magna-Doodle, painting, message board, word/picture bank, talking text-writer

C. ADULTS

- Demonstrate the relationship between the written and spoken word daily by such behaviors as reading to children, taking dictation, labeling natural objects, and helping children write their own phrases
- Use appropriate written symbols while working with children
- Take advantage of situations to write children's ideas, titles, etc. to relate the spoken word to the written word (e.g., descriptions of work, titles for drawings)
- Encourage and praise children's attempts at using written/ symbolic language for the spoken word

D. CHILDREN

- Use written and/or illustrative forms of language to express themselves
- Invent spellings to represent spoken words
- Dictate stories or statements to adults
- Interpret written/illustrative communication into spoken language

Example

Arlitt Child Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
Bank Street Family Center, Manhattan, New York

Young children have plenty to say. Adults who demonstrate for children that writing is just "talk written down" give them access to writing as another form of expressive communication. Programs concerned with children's literacy development can help children make the spoken-to-written word connection by creating print-rich environments such as some we observed in our travels.

At the Bank Street Family Center in Manhattan, NY, adults make use of story dictation. During our visit, the children dictated the following chart story to an early childhood teacher who wrote each child's statement in a different color, modeling correct letter formation, and being careful to write the statements exactly as the children said them:

Something I Can Do All By Myself

Katie: I could have a puppy who is real and I could take care of it all by myself.

Eli: I can buckle my sandals.

Kate: I can buckle my sandals and brush my teeth.

Julia: I could weigh myself all by myself.

Gina: I could stay in bed but then I didn't do it.

Molly: I could help mommy clean up my toys.

Jessie: I clean up my toys.

Sam: I clean up my Ninja Turtles all by myself.

Wesley: I could clean up my toys. I dump out my toys and I put them back. I have a basket for them.

This group-authored story was posted on a classroom wall enabling children to "read" their written expressions and those of their friends. Names beside children's statements fostered their sense of authorship.

Also posted in the room, were children's marker drawings with individually dictated descriptions all of which were mounted on larger paper of contrasting colors creating an impressive art gallery effect. Masses of marker swirls and scribbles acquired significant new meaning when accompanied by the children's dictated explanations. "It's a rocketship falling out of the sky," said Kira. "It's a picture of a grasshopper in the colored grass. And I got some green in it. See it?" explained Kira's friend. Story dictation gives respectful attention to children's expressive ideas in addition to showing them that what they think, they can say and what they say, can be written.

Another important piece to the development of children's emergent writing abilities is the provision of opportunities for children to write. At the Arlitt Child Development Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, children are encouraged and helped to write. A sign at the writing center suggests, "Write a letter to a friend." A message center caption says, "write a message to a friend." Such invitations to children encourage and affirm early writing attempts and authorship. Using individual word banks for each child, teachers provide word card models for as few or as many words as children want to know. Children were observed frequently retrieving and referring to their word banks and using the word cards as models for words they wanted to write. Often the result of these early writing attempts are scribbles but teachers at this center were observed to be quick with praising comments such as "You wrote your name!" A Post Office center encourages the sharing of children's written communications. Formal writing instruction is both inappropriate and unnecessary practice when compared with the results of such print-rich environments.

Young children have many things to say. Adults at the above-mentioned exemplary centers encourage children's literacy development by providing opportunities like the examples given for children to develop their understanding of the written-spoken word connection.

▶ GOAL

22.5 Children express their creative ideas using a variety of language experiences.

Best Practice

All children are encouraged to express their creative ideas in a variety of ways. Adaptive communication equipment is used, as needed, to encourage this creative expression for children with handicapping conditions.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Is open to, appreciative of, and enthusiastic about creative ideas presented in unique ways
- Time is allocated so that creative ideas can be formulated, developed, and presented without such constraints

PHYSICAL

- Space is allocated so that creative ideas can be formulated, developed, and presented without such constraints

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- A variety of materials are available so that the expression of creative ideas is not only motivated, but can also be completed
- Are adapted/modified so that all children are motivated to express their creative ideas
- Sample activities/materials might include: a wide variety of (types/levels) high quality children's literature, puppets, creative drama props and costumes, overhead projector, listening centers, video tape, music, mime, dance, movement, dictation related to children's products, complete-a-story/rhyme/limerick, novel items to stimulate creative expression, theme related items

C. ADULTS

- Encourage the unique self-expression of children
- Provide plentiful and unique medium for children to express themselves (cameras; overhead; costume materials and props; moveable construction parts such as grates, crates, buckets, beams, and boards)
- Model creative expression and the enjoyment of such expression
- Demonstrate spontaneity and pleasure with the beauty of language
- Are flexible enough to allow children to initiate or continue creative expression

D. CHILDREN

- Express their creative ideas in a variety of ways
- Demonstrate spontaneity and pleasure with the beauty and use of language
- Experiment with language in a variety of settings with a variety of techniques

Example

Creative Preschool, Tallahassee, Florida

Dramatic play is one vehicle through which young children can express, especially with language, their creative ideas. In order for dramatic play to be both creative and language-rich, however, it must be nurtured and supported by adults who supply children with encouragement, uninterrupted time, and a plentiful assortment of interesting and useful materials.

Excitement was high during our visit to the Creative Preschool in Tallahassee, Florida. The preschoolers' had recently visited the restaurant credited by the *Guiness Book of World Records* for making the world's largest pizza. As preschoolers will, these industrious youngsters wove their interesting restaurant experience into their dramatic play as they planned to recreate the world's largest pizza. We watched busy children cooperatively haul huge plywood trays heaped with sand for pizza dough. Sticks, leaves, and stones became pepperoni, cheese, and mushrooms. Children used language to describe, plan, negotiate, and evaluate their work. "Matt, what if we make a big oven out of these crates and then stick it (the pizza) in the oven?" posed one ambitious young boy to another. After gaining approval from Matt, he excitedly announced, "You guys! You guys! I want you to know that we're gonna try to make a big oven for this big pizza! Come on. We got to get other people. Let's go!" As the children scurried about, teachers moved in and out of the area praising the efforts, posing questions, and introducing problem situations for the children to consider thus encouraging elaboration of the pizza play. Dozens of plastic crates and containers, a large amount of lumber, many loose, moveable construction parts, and oceans of sand were available to support the children's ideas and encourage discussion.

Children learn language by using real, authentic language in various motivating natural settings. The planning of such unique and interesting experiences as the pizza field trip, along with the provision of encouragement, time, and materials, resulted in the ensuing creative, very language-rich dramatic play we observed which these children sustained through every outdoor session for our three day visit.

▶ GOAL

22.6 Children's literature is an integral part of the language environment.

Best Practice

All children have daily opportunities to experience literature that is high quality, durable, and in good repair, representing a variety of construction types and literary genres. The literature is selected to serve an appropriate range of developmental levels while being used across the curriculum and portraying human differences in a bias-free, positive but realistic manner. Adults model enjoyment and a love for books and reading and they use a variety of media and methods to help children experience literature. They provide adaptive materials, and/or assistance so that all children can experience literature. Care is taken to display books "face front" in a quiet, cozy reading area and in other classroom learning areas, thus inviting children's perusal.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Suggests that books are wonderful and exciting, providing vicarious experiences which may be otherwise difficult or impossible for teachers to arrange.
- Encourages and supports children's natural curiosity and desire to "make meaning" for their world using books.
- Is stress-free and safe for taking risks while experimenting with symbolic communication, i.e., photographs, illustrations, words.

PHYSICAL

- Contains a variety of high quality children's literature books that are durable and in good repair.
- Displays books "face front" and at an appropriate height so that all children can see and reach them easily. The way books are displayed invites children's selection and perusal of them.
- Includes a quiet, cozy, well-lighted reading area.
- Displays books in other learning areas to suggest relationships between activities/materials and the printed word.

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Children's literature is used frequently to supplement children's real life experiences related to curricular topics, as well as for enjoyment
- Are adapted/modified so that *all* children are motivated to become involved with children's literature (large print, braille, multi-lingual books, magnifiers, tape recorded stories, Big Books)
- Children's literature is available in a wide variety of levels, types, topics, genres, and formats
- Are extended by using related children's literature
- Are sometimes based on favorite children's literature stories, characters, or settings
- Use children's literature as a supplemental information source when experiential learning cannot provide all the information that could be gathered by children concerning a topic

C. ADULTS

- Model silent and oral reading behavior
- Read aloud to children daily
- Involve children in literature to the extent that children "experience" the story being read
- Create an environment conducive to children selecting and "reading" children's literature
- Make a wide variety of children's literature, regarding both ability and interest, available so that *all* children in the program are motivated to "read" and can be successful while "reading"
- Introduce children to the viewpoints of others in literature
- Use children's literature to extend and enhance thematic units
- Relate classroom occurrences to occurrences in literature that children have read or heard about

D. CHILDREN

- Respond to children's literature in a variety of ways (questions, retelling, art, creative drama, movement)
- Vicariously experience a wide range of emotions, experiences, and achievements
- Develop an appreciation of different types of literature
- Have "linguistic fun"
- Share stories and reactions to stories with peers and adults
- Become curious and reflective after reading/hearing children's literature
- Role play characters and events from children's literature
- Develop new vocabulary and a sense of story
- Become aware of the typical elements of a story
- Reflect on and discuss their concerns related to children's literature stories
- Gain information from books

Example

Merricats Castle Preschool, New York City, New York

We watched with interest as a young boy approached the book display shelving at the Merricats Castle Preschool in New York City. It was easy for him to see each book displayed because the books were arranged on the shelving "face front." He made his selection and then asked Dillion, a developmentally delayed adult aide, to read the book to him. Both Dillion and the boy reclined on the rug near the book area. Dillion read each page while commenting on the illustrations, asking questions about the story content, and having his reading companion predict what might happen next. The reading of this book became not only a academic event, but a social one, with both the reader and person being read to enjoying pleasurable time with a good book.

We also observed two young children "reading" a Big Book together. A teacher had obviously read this book to/with them and now they were "reading" it again and enjoying doing so.

Books about dinosaurs were also placed prominently around the classroom. Dinosaurs are a favorite topic of young children. This month's theme at Merricats Castle Preschool had been dinosaurs, so as many books about dinosaurs as could be collected were brought to, and displayed at, the preschool. The children responded to this theme and the supplemental books by creating a room-length mural depicting many types of dinosaurs. They also created a lot of "cave play" dramatics in and around a room-corner cave constructed out of brown butcher paper erected over a counter and some benches.

So at this preschool children's literature was an integral part of the program. Adults and children both read and listened to stories daily. Children modeled adult reading behavior and had a variety of quality children's literature to select from. This children's literature motivated, enriched, and supplemented activities appropriate and necessary for the development of young children. Books were everywhere, but most importantly, children were using them.

Here are the heads of four insects
photographed through a
powerful microscope
Can you guess their names?
1
2

8. Aesthetic Development

▶ GOAL

23. Children have many, varied opportunities for aesthetic development by experiencing/discovering the beauty inherent in our world.

Best Practice

Children have weekly opportunities for the development of aesthetic appreciation by *exposure* to nature, and the contemporary/classic arts. Children have weekly opportunities for the development of aesthetic expression through *experimentation* with nature/natural materials and the arts. Children have monthly opportunities *outside of the program* to enhance their aesthetic development, and monthly opportunities to observe and interact with guests. Children with disabilities are provided with the necessary *assistance* to ensure their aesthetic development.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Cultivates and supports program participants' aesthetic responses to the beauty inherent in our world

PHYSICAL

- Is consciously planned for beauty and for sensory stimulation and through color, pattern, texture, shape, sound, smell, taste, and motion

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Sample expressive materials/activities include: paint, collage, dough and and clay, print making, woodworking, music making, sewing, photography, dance, creative dramatics, literary products
- Display examples of classic, contemporary, and child-made art, sculpture, paintings, photographs, cultural artifacts
- Visit art museums, cultural fairs, dance studios, athletic events, dramatic and musical practices/performances
- Play a variety of music representing many styles, cultures
- Invite visiting performers/artists/guests into the center to share their love for the beauty inherent in our world
- Examine and discuss beautiful objects and the relativity of beauty

C. ADULTS

- Expose children to a broad range of experiences which stimulate sensory and emotional responses to beauty, e.g., dance, music, literary arts, visual arts, athletics, photography
- Make children aware of the examples of beauty in their natural world and of the aesthetic qualities in everyday experiences (Feeney, 1989)
- Model responses to beauty which convey the personal satisfaction of aesthetic involvement with our world
- Provide a wide variety and enough materials (including adaptive), and plenty of time, for children to be involved in personally satisfying creative and aesthetic expression
- Provide opportunities outside the program, e.g., nature walks, field trips to arts, sports, cultural events

- Arrange opportunities for children to observe and interact with artists, poets, musicians, naturalists, etc. who enjoy sharing their specialty with children and who have a unique ability to stimulate aesthetic awareness
- Expose children to beauty without imposing adult standards or adult made products for children to copy (Schirrmacher, 1989)
- Use reflective dialogue in talking with children about their creative expressions without valuing, judging, or over-emphasizing their products
- Help children develop aesthetic criteria and their individual tastes by discussing, comparing, and appreciating the variety of styles of creative expression in our world

D. CHILDREN

- Have frequent opportunities for the development of aesthetic appreciation and emotional responses to the beauty inherent in our world through exposure to nature, and the contemporary and classic arts (including dance, music, literary arts, visual arts, athletics, photography, etc.)
- Have frequent opportunities for the development of aesthetic expression through active involvement and experimentation with nature/natural materials and the arts
- Have frequent opportunities outside of the program to enhance their aesthetic development (e.g., nature walks, field trips to arts, sports, cultural events)
- Have frequent opportunities to observe and interact with artists, poets, musicians, naturalists, etc. who enjoy sharing their specialty with children or have a unique ability to stimulate aesthetic awareness
- Use reflective evaluation to describe and evaluate their own (and others') creative expressions thus, developing their personal criteria and individual style
- Children with disabling conditions access adaptive equipment and use the related services necessary for their participation in aesthetic experiences

Example

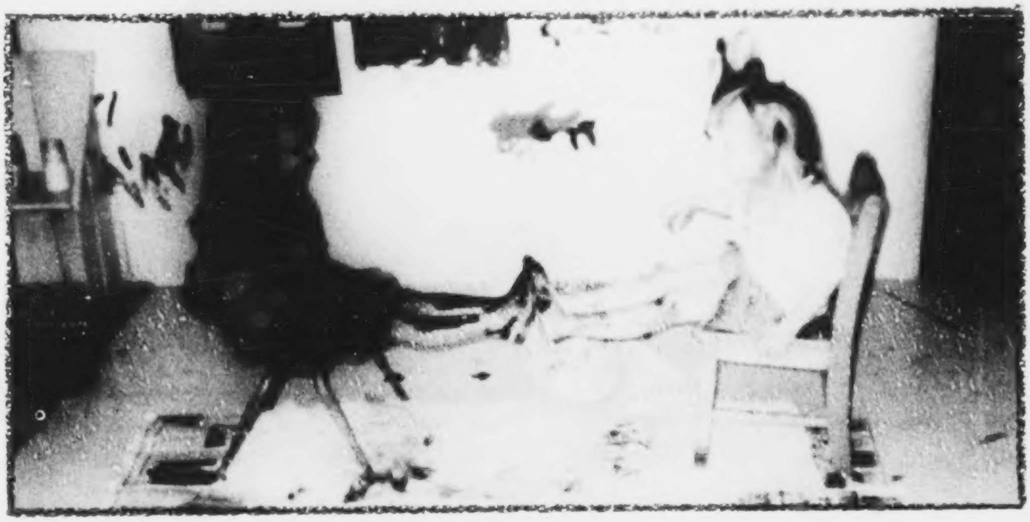
Bank Street Family Center, Manhattan, New York
Westside Public School District #66, Omaha, Nebraska, and
Early Childhood Programs of Vermont College at Norwich University, Montpelier, Vermont

Helen Keller once stated that "beauty is in the *heart* of the beholder." Sensitive adults plan to surround children with a variety of expressions of beauty thus stimulating children's aesthetic responses to such. Many of the selected integrated early childhood programs employ practices related to children's aesthetic development which, we believe, are in concert with the above statement.

In New York City, a movement specialist at the Bank Street Family Center helps children discover, through experience, the beauty of human motion. We watched children "warm-up" by touching their elbows to their knees, their wrists to their chins, etc. Then, responding to prompts and cues from the skilled teacher (and using music, rhythmic tom-tom beats, and a festive, multi-colored parachute) the children became carousel ponies, ocean fishes, and jacks-in-boxes. They shook, jumped, galloped, swam, crawled, spun, and rolled. Access to this activity was provided for Gina, a child with severe physical disabilities, by a dedicated early childhood teacher who knew that, while Gina needed assistance in order to become a horse on a merry-go-round, she could easily and independently become a fish "swimming" in the colorful parachute ocean. The integration of music, movement, color, language, dramatic play, and children with a variety of abilities provided multiple opportunities to experience the beauty inherent in their world.

Halfway across the continent, in the early childhood programs at Omaha Public Schools, children explored the Hawaiian culture by experiencing the less obvious qualities of the coconut and the pineapple. Children dipped these tropical delights into red, yellow, and blue tempera paint. The fruits were then rolled over white butcher paper. The result was a colorful, textured mural which was displayed in the center for all to enjoy.

We observed other more subtle but equally purposeful examples of efforts to develop children aesthetically. In the entry way to the Bank Street Family Center, a children's art exhibition and a glass showcase display the results of children's experiences with a variety of materials and mediums. A lovely kite hangs in the corner of one classroom. At the Vermont College of Norwich University unusual plants and carved wooden figures decorate the windowsills. Colorful murals appropriate to the Vermont culture and the local community adorn the hallway walls. Children often paint at a large, multiple-child Plexiglass easel. While we were observing in the center, children were painting at a unique and very beautiful table fashioned by teachers from a Plexiglass square resting on four wooden child-sized chairs. A vase of locally-gathered dried flowers was placed in the table's center and lighted from a spot light shining from beneath the table. This center and the other above mentioned centers are examples of adults' conscious efforts toward planning the emotional and physical early childhood environment for beauty and sensory stimulation through color, pattern, texture, shape, sound, smell, taste, and motion. These adults purposely intend that the beauty inherent in our world will become part of the "hearts" of these young beholders.



9. Transition Goal

▶ GOAL

27. Transitions between activities are smooth, appropriate, and meaningful.

Best Practice

All children are aware of impending transitions. Children, as a group, make transitions within a short period of time, but not necessarily at the same time. Learning takes place during transitions.

Suggested Classroom Implications

A. ENVIRONMENT

EMOTIONAL

- Learning is perceived as being able to occur at any place and during any time within the early childhood education environment
- Is active and occupying rather than passive and full of waiting
- Is one of smooth, not abrupt, changes

PHYSICAL

- Is arranged so that children can move freely, without physical difficulty, from one area to another during transitions

B. ACTIVITIES/MATERIALS

- Keep children cognitively and/or physically occupied while making transitions
- Sample activities could include: singing songs, movement to music, finger plays, role playing, children classifying themselves by an observable characteristic ("all children with the color yellow on their clothes ...")

C. ADULTS

- Allow a sufficient amount of time for transitions to take place, don't nag or coerce children through transitions
- Give a warning about impending transitions to *all* children that includes a cue
- Are definite in statements about what occurs next ("In a few minutes we will be getting ready to go to the snack room, so it's important for us to start cleaning up shortly." "You can complete that painting, but then we will have to move to the circle area").
- Help children learn or have fun during transitions
- Perceive transitions as organized, purposeful, and motivating times to learn
- Avoid situations where all children must do the same thing at the same time

D. CHILDREN

- Make transitions within a short time, but not necessarily at the same time as everyone else
- Are actively involved in transitions, not waiting for others or for the next activity to occur
- Are aware of impending transitions and provided cues (auditory, visual and/or physical) associated with transition times

- Are allowed to draw the activity they are involved in to a logical conclusion
- Learn and/or have fun during transitions

Example

Bank Street College Family Center, Manhattan, New York

You say you've never seen wild horses in New York City. We have, and they weren't far from Central Park. We observed a wonderful creative movement class at the Bank Street College Family Living Center. The class was a group of three, four, and five year olds of all different colors, sizes, and abilities. They all had one thing in common, however. They enjoyed pretending and moving while they did. We saw them pretend to be fish swimming on and under a brightly colored parachute that represented the sea. We saw them march and dance to music in many interpretative ways. We also saw them become horses through the suggestion of their movement teacher and go galloping around the room, legs kicking high and heads bobbing. The way this teacher helped her horses calm down to the point of being quiet and organized so that they could walk back to their regular classroom was a true example of an exemplary transition.

The teacher initiated this activity by telling a single, spontaneous story about horses running and soon all the children became galloping horses. After a time of rigorous activity, the teacher's story suggested that the herd was beginning to tire and needed to slow down to begin grazing and look for a spot to sleep. After a few moments of grazing, a barn and corral were located (the far end of the room occupied by a long table). The children followed the story's lead to find a soft spot to bed down and fall asleep. After all the horses were asleep a magical touch by the teacher signaled each child to awaken and quietly line up to go back to their classroom. In a few minutes young children had made the transition from galloping horses to quiet three, four, and five year olds ready to return to their classroom. Best of all, the transition took no raised teachers' voices, no flashing of lights, no adult or child frustration. It took a teacher who knew how to facilitate a smooth, appropriate, and meaningful transition.

C. Vehicles for Delivering Key Curricular Principles

Learning Areas

Child development theory and research demonstrate that it is important to design a curriculum that meets the needs of the "whole child." Children need activities that will aid the growth of their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and aesthetic self, both specifically and interactively. Gross and fine motor control are important in early childhood education, since large muscle development precedes and aids the small muscle development which is so important for the writing and artistic elements of the primary school curriculum. Emotionally, children need to develop a good self-concept (accurate perception of oneself) and positive self-esteem (value placed on oneself) in order to form favorable personality characteristics and positive mental health. Socially, children need experiences that will aid the development of empathy and cooperation. It is when children are healthy and feel in control of their bodies, emotions, and social interactions that they can learn at an optimum level. The cognitive aspects of the curriculum should include the areas of problem solving, conceptual development, and creativity. Additionally, children are helped to develop aesthetically by experiencing and discovering the beauty inherent in our world. Young children need to learn how to learn, how to work well with peers and adults, and how to appreciate the beauty of their world.

Organizing a good early childhood learning environment is a complex task that requires systematic planning, management, and evaluation. In such an environment, the curriculum must be organized to meet the developmental needs of the young child. An effective early childhood curriculum consists of a variety of learning areas designed to offer young children an individualized developmental approach to learning while providing for learning-style differences; small-group instruction directed by a teacher; and integrated approaches to teaching and learning, such as thematic units and extended interest areas, that offer content learning opportunities through a variety of interrelated experiences and activities (Day, 1983).

Utilization and Scheduling of Areas

A main characteristic of the curriculum and educational environment is child-initiated play in a variety of areas each day. Children should have access to all the areas in the classroom as their interest dictates and space management allows. There should be no set time to use specific areas in the classroom. While group activities, such as special science, music, or movement activities, would be scheduled throughout the year, such scheduling can be flexible and is facilitated by the lack of a rigid time allocation. The following learning areas (with examples of materials and explanations of how the areas serve developmental needs) are important elements of a preschool environment.

Reading/Language Arts Area

The main objectives for this area are to provide many and varied activities for children to be involved in all the language arts (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking), to develop an understanding of the relationship between oral and written language, to promote success and satisfaction in beginning reading, and to encourage independent reading and thinking for information and pleasure. Representative materials would be children's literature for varied abilities and interests, a variety of environmental print, records, tapes, filmstrips, earphones, pictures, writing/publishing materials, and games involving the language arts.

Block Area

Blocks are multipurposeful in early childhood development. Block play assists the development of self-concept, social interaction, and cooperation; motivates dramatic play; and allows acceptable emotional release. The manipulative nature of blocks aids eye-hand coordination, visual perception, and both large and small muscle development. Blocks also help conceptual development in mathematics (e.g., measurement, fractions, seriation), science (e.g., balance, gravity, stability), and social studies (e.g., community, mapping). The key elements of this area are unit blocks of various sizes, shapes, and textures, as well as props and/or theme pieces to extend block play, a storage area, and adequate building space.

Family Living Area

This area allows children to be creative, to act out feelings in a comfortable setting, to develop communication skills, to take on a variety of roles, and to develop social skills. The most important supplies for this area are child-sized furniture and appliances, dress-up clothes, real props for cooking and cleaning, a full-length mirror, and special thematic objects.

Manipulative Area

During manipulative play, children handle relatively small pieces of equipment such as puzzle pieces, rods, beads, sewing cards, and nesting toys. Manipulative play helps the physical development of fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination, as well as cognitive development in such areas as seriation and comparison.

Woodworking Area

Woodworking provides young children with an opportunity for cognitive, psychomotor, and social/emotional development. Woodworking naturally incorporates skills commonly used in the language arts, mathematics, and science. It aids the development of large and small muscle control, problem solving, respect for others, and creative expression. Essential materials are a sturdy workbench, a supply of tools and carpentry materials, measuring instruments, soft wood and other construction materials, and storage space.

Science Area

The main purpose of the science area is to develop the attitudes and skills needed for exploring science. Young children will observe, measure, classify, predict, experiment, and then communicate their discoveries. Young children will begin developing the habits of problem solving, inquiring, and investigating. Typical of the materials in the science area will be weighing instruments, magnets, simple machines, small animals, an aquarium, magnifying glasses, and various objects to take apart and rebuild.

Art Area

For young children, art is more than a creative activity. It helps develop fine muscle control and eye-hand coordination. Working with a variety of mediums and materials brings sensory pleasure and aesthetic development to children while at the same time allowing them to express their feelings and emotions in an acceptable, constructive manner. Conceptually, children learn much about color, line, shape, and texture during art activities. Art also allows children to express themselves visually when they may be unable to do so with language. Typical art supplies are easels, paints, crayons, brushes, paper, clay, paste, scissors, and markers. Unique supplies and mediums such as sponges, corks, potato mashers, foods for printing, diverse collage materials, etc., should also be available.

Water and Sand Play Area

Water and sand play is a very enjoyable sensory experience for young children. As children play with sand, water, and many other substances that can be used in water tables, many developmental activities happen naturally. Children use large muscles to dig, haul, and build, and small muscles to form and pick up. There are many possibilities for learning including mathematics concepts like measuring, estimating, equivalency and weighing; language communication during dramatic play at the table; and science, as children experiment with quantities and qualities of materials. Common elements of this area are a quality sand and water table, plastic containers, measuring devices, mixers, sponges, eyedroppers, funnels, plastic tubing, and objects that sink or float.

Large Muscle Area

The main objective of this area is to promote large muscle development while young children are running, jumping, pushing, pulling, and riding. Physical exercise also aids body control and good health, provides times for children to become more sociable, builds self-esteem, and aids direction following. Number concepts and spatial concepts, such as over/under, up/down, in/out, and around/through, are incorporated into large muscle activities. The area should be equipped with riding toys, traffic signs, balance beams, climbing apparatus, mats, tunnels, balls, and other materials for throwing and catching.

Outdoor Area

An outdoor area, including a variety of surfaces, supports creative physical activities and social interaction. Young children have a need for freedom to make believe, to make noise, and sometimes even to make messes. Outdoor space gives them this freedom. The outdoor environment adds another dimension to learning. Counting, measuring, sorting, and classifying can be done outdoors with natural objects. Objects to see, hear, draw, talk about, and write about are plentiful outside, which leads to many language arts and fine arts activities. Plants, animals, rocks, and the sky motivate many "hands-on" science activities. Virtually all classroom activities may be held outside, allowing greater flexibility in scheduling, using equipment, using space, and balancing quiet and active experiences (Day, 1983; Maxim, 1985; Spodek, 1985).

Themes

Whole child development depends on the dynamic interaction of the cognitive, physical, language, social, emotional, self-help, and aesthetic domains. Curricularly, these developmental domains cannot be thought of or treated separately but rather in an integrated, mutually dependent fashion. This "whole child" view of development calls for an early childhood curriculum which is integrated across all the developmental domains, facilitating their mutual and interdependent growth. Adults must provide children with a carefully planned, integrated curriculum rich with opportunities for the development of each domain. The EC-SPEED Curriculum for All Children accomplishes an integrated developmentally appropriate curricular approach primarily through the provision of learning areas but also with the use of themes and children's literature which are based on young children's interests and then carefully woven into the learning areas and other curricular activities.

The use of themes in early childhood education is not new. Traditionally, however, early childhood programs have used topics or themes as the curricular core, driving the planning and activity selection. Themes were often to be limited to foods, holidays, or art. The EC-SPEED Curriculum for All Children has as its core the developmental needs of children. Thus, children's developmental needs, rather than topics or themes, drive curricular decisions. Activity selections are developmentally-based and integrated throughout learning areas. Such a curricular approach redefines the traditional use of themes allowing themes to become vehicles for delivering an integrated, developmentally appropriate curriculum. Themes are selected and based on children's interests, carefully woven into the learning areas and other curricular activities, and according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1986, p. 63), "involve sustained, cooperative effort and involvement over several days and perhaps weeks."

An example of a well-developed theme used effectively to explore the concept of traveling was observed in the West Side Public Schools Integrated Preschool in Omaha, Nebraska. Children learned Hawaiian songs, words, and dance movements at circle time, through children's literature, and from environmental print. The writing/language area was transformed into a travel agency complete with ticket printing supplies and Hawaiian travel brochures and videos. The family living area offered opportunities for packing suitcases with beach towels, colorful swimsuits, flowered jams, sunglasses, and beach shoes. Children investigated coconuts by shaking, cutting, and cooking. A variety of Hawaiian jellies were available for sampling at snack time. To support and encourage children's dramatic play, teachers dressed in bathing suits, sunglasses, and "flew" to Hawaii. Full length mirrors gave children a chance to view themselves in their "vacation finery."

The sand/sensory area gave children motoric opportunities to dig in sand for various sizes and shapes of shells and to "finger paint" on a table covered with tanning lotion. A large outline of an airplane was taped to the carpet allowing children to "board" the airplane, suitcases in tow, and "fly" to Hawaii. Upon arrival in Hawaii (block area), children received leis, unpacked their suitcases and headed for the "beach" (brown butcher paper) or for a swim in the "ocean" (blue butcher paper). Rich dramatic play ensued. Children's aesthetic and creative needs were developed with activities such as dipping pineapples and coconuts in tempera paint and rolling them over white paper creating a magnificent mural which was displayed, and making and decorating sun visors for the beach. The tropical vacation atmosphere was heightened by native Hawaiian music in the background.

The EC-SPEED Curriculum for All Children encourages the use of such well-developed topics and themes which get beyond traditional and, perhaps, superficial treatment of topics and/or themes in the early childhood curriculum. Well-developed, child-centered themes and topics can add and sustain interest throughout the early childhood curriculum and serve as a vehicle for delivering key curricular principles.

Children's Literature

Another vehicle for the delivery of key curricular principles in an integrated, developmentally appropriate early childhood program is the careful selection and use of high quality children's literature. Young children need many and varied opportunities for literacy development. An early childhood environment rich in literary experiences becomes the context for facilitating the development of young children's literacy. Children's literature is an integral part in the provision of such a literary environment. Research supports the strong correlation between children's early experience with books and their later, successful literacy development (Wells, 1981; Schickendanz, 1986). Children who have access to print, are read to, and have early experiences with writing and with caring adults who value education are the children who become successful readers regardless of race, ethnicity, social class, or I.Q. (Cullinan, 1989).

Cullinan (1989), emphasizes that literature makes a difference in children's lives in the following three ways:

- Children's language development is enriched by exposure to literature
- Children's later educational achievement is related to early experiences of listening to stories
- Children build their storehouse of language from their communicative experiences and develop their concept of story from the stories they hear

Cullinan (1989) also cites numerous researchers whose work demonstrates dramatic results using children's literature with children with disabilities. Although young children learn best through primary experiences, literature can present vicarious secondary experiences which may be impossible to recreate for some children as first-hand situations. And, finally, children's literature promotes the early childhood priority regarding the interrelated development of the cognitive and affective domain because "Literature has the power to educate both the heart and the head" (Huck, Hepler, and Hickman, 1987, p. 9).

Key considerations for selecting and using literature in the early childhood curriculum include the following:

- Select high quality, durable books of a variety of construction types; i.e., cloth books, board books, hard bound books, big books discard/replace worn copies of books
- Select literature representative of the various literary genres and types, e.g., picture books including wordless, predictable, cumulative tales, participation books, rhymes, concept books, alphabet and number books, easy-to-read books, folklore, non-fiction
- Select literature which spans an appropriate range of developmental levels

- Select literature which appeals to the varied interests of program children and adults
- Select literature which portrays human differences, e.g., color, gender, age, ethnicity, ability, in a bias-free, realistic but positive manner
- Use literature across the curriculum, throughout the learning areas, and in conjunction with themes and special topics
- Use a variety of media and methods for presenting literature to children
- Small, cozy book areas are more appealing to children than larger areas (Schickendanz, 1986)
- Display books face front where possible (Jalongo, 1988)
- Model a positive enjoyment and love for books and reading
- Select literature which uses real, authentic language rather than controlled vocabulary

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